

# STOURBRIDGE CHRONICLE



Thursday, April 17, 2014

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## School Pledge

Head promises big improvement

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## Mine Graft

Discover pit history on geology walk

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## Frank Talk

Boxer backs mental health charity shop

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## Petition has saved pub from demolition

A PUB which looked destined to be demolished and replaced with a convenience store has reopened following a community campaign.

Two applications were tabled to demolish The Swan Inn, in Halesowen, by owners Punch Taverns to allow a shop to be built in its place.

But following a protest by residents, including a petition of 700 signatures, the first proposal by the pub chain firm was dropped, and the second was thrown out by Dudley Council.

### Talks

Beer is back on tap at the pub after it reopened again under experienced licensees Polly and Mark Johnson, however they claim it may change hands again in two months.

Punch Taverns confirmed talks were ongoing with a view to secure a new buyer to take over the pub in Long Lane.

Mrs Johnson said: "Punch Taverns asked us to come in here and we've loved it here, but we're now being told we are to leave in eight weeks.

"It's a real shame because since being here we have seen the customers come back and I think it was starting to do well again, but what can you do."

## Four arrests in police raids

FOUR men arrested after police swooped on a gang suspected of burglaries at nearly 70 homes across the West Midlands have been bailed.

Officers carried out the operation on nine addresses last week and three men aged in their 20s were arrested at a travellers site on Oak Lane, Kingswinford. Police said all three had now been bailed until May 23.

A 48-year-old man arrested from a caravan in Heath Town has also been bailed until the same date.

# STREETS APART OVER CLOSURE

**A ROAD will be closed permanently to traffic as part of a controversial £10,000 scheme which has divided residents near Buffery Park.**

Campaigners claim highways bosses are 'out of order' by backing a project which they claim has made their lives a misery.

Blackacre Road, near Buffery Park, has been shut in recent months as part of a trial scheme after people living in the road claimed it was being used by motorists as a 'rat run'.

They said traffic was using the road as a shortcut to get to Dudley Southern Bypass, claiming more than 6,000 vehicles were using the narrow street per day.

### Outrage

Dudley Council's highways officials closed the road to through traffic but this sparked outrage from residents living on side streets around Buffery Park.

They objected to the scheme, claiming it had only served to push traffic onto their side streets. They fear for the safety of children using the park.

The council's highways chief, Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, has agreed to make the move permanent.

He said: "Blackacre Road has been a very complicated issue and we have had to make sure we did not rush into anything.

"We consulted widely on the proposals which revealed residents Blackacre Road, who were directly affected, wanted the road to remain closed for through traffic.

"It shows we have listened carefully to what people have had to say and acted on this important information. Alternative pro-

by Andrew Turton

posals for traffic calming across the area were overwhelmingly rejected."

One of the campaigners, Bill Chambers, claimed the council failed to listened to the 'majority' of people living in the area.

"They have just gone and listened to the people in one street rather than everyone else who says this is a problem," he said.

Highways officials drew up plans to install traffic calming measures and a 20mph limit while allowing motorists to use Blackacre Road again last year.

But a consultation with residents found that 23.5 per cent supported those proposals while 76.5 per cent were against.

In light of the outcome of this consultation, officials recommended that the closure of Blackacre Road to through traffic be retained and only some traffic calming such as speed bumps be introduced.

But a further petition with 176 signatures is objecting to any traffic calming and was presented to the council.

There were also two petitions totalling 90 signatures asking for Blackacre Road to remain shut.

## Black Country gran has got talent



The dramatic routine by Sarah, aged 79, and her 40-year-old partner Nico Espinosa on the BGT stag

SALSA dancing granny Sarah 'Paddy' Jones has her sights set on the Britain's Got Talent crown. She and partner Nico's stunning performance on TV saw them put her straight through to the semi-finals.

The 79-year-old, originally from Stourbridge, amazed celebrity judges as she was thrown around the stage by partner Nico Espinosa in the show on Saturday night. Paddy's performance was so good that it produced the first use of a 'golden buzzer', pressed by Amanda Holden, which puts her straight through to the live shows.

The dance, which began slowly before exploding into life, did not get off to the best start as hard-to-please Simon Cowell

pushed his red buzzer and yawned. But he was left agape as he watched her doing splits and tumbles and swung around by Nico who, at 40, is almost half her age. After Simon told her: "Wow. I apologise for what I did because I did buzz a little early before all the crazy things happened. It was extraordinary."

Paddy, who used to run Paddy's Fabrics in Coventry Street, danced from the age of two but gave it up to have her four children. She moved to Spain with husband David where he died of leukaemia, and she started dancing again at classes run by Nico. The pair won the Spanish version of Britain's Got Talent in 2009 and a 10,000 Euro prize.



Sarah 'Paddy' Jones

## Concern at impact of betting machines

GAMBLERS lost £24 million on high stakes machines in town centre bookies in the West Midlands in one year, figures have shown.

Campaigners say it reinforces calls for a clampdown on fixed odds betting terminals that allow people to gamble hundreds of pounds at a time.

The Campaign for Fairer Gambling reveals that some of the biggest losses were incurred in areas with the highest deprivation, with people in Sandwell blowing £7.4m on the machines last year. Estimates by the group suggest gamblers in Dudley lost just under £5m.

The Association of British Bookmakers disputes the statistics and said it would make 'no sense' for its members to target poor communities.

It comes as a single bookmakers' chain, Ladbrokes, was shown to have made £1 billion from the highly addictive machines in just one month.

Councils could be given powers to stop clusters of betting shops.

Bookmakers are allowed a maximum four fixed odd betting machines in each of their premises. They are so popular that it is claimed they account for up to 80 per cent of the profits in some high street betting offices.

## Elderly man knocked over

AN ELDERLY man was seriously injured when he was knocked to the ground after a car hit his parked vehicle in Sedgley, say police.

The 79-year-old was said to be putting shopping into the boot of his car when it appeared to have been shunted by another vehicle in Brownsall Road last week. Police say he was knocked backwards to the ground, suffering a head injury, cuts and bruises. He was taken by ambulance to Russells Hall Hospital.

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# Homes go-ahead at former school site

PLANS for a housing development on part of the site of a former school in Cradley have been given the go-ahead.

The proposals have been submitted by William Davis Limited which wants to build nine homes on the northern part of the old Cradley High School site.

It comes as work continues on a nearby £18 million retirement

village, which will have 120 apartments. It is being built on the main part of the site which was left vacant when the school was demolished in 2010.

A planning application for the homes has been approved by Dudley Council after being supported by officers.

The development will be made up of five detached houses and two

pairs of semi-detached houses. They would all be two-storey and finished in brick and tile.

One letter of objection raised concerns about the new houses being out of character with the surrounding area and fears about an increase in traffic.

A report by planning officer Pete Reed said: "This is a reserved matters application for the erection of

nine dwellings that follows on from the granting of outline planning permission for the erection of dwellings on the site as part of the application for the redevelopment of the wider site. The approved means of access will be provided through an extension to Ormande Close."

Midland Heart is building the retirement village, expected to be completed next spring.

# Town centre route will open again to all traffic

A £650,000 scheme to open up a main route through Dudley town centre to all traffic for the first time in 12 years has been approved.

It's hoped the scheme in King Street will be a welcome boost for traders and shops and aid the town's regeneration.

At the moment only buses and taxis can use the route and motorists wishing to drive from one side of King Street to the other are diverted in a loop around Flood Street car parks to the rear of King Street.

Under the proposals, the road will be re-opened to all traffic, which the council says will have improve access to the town centre including the Churchill shopping precinct.

It will allow businesses to make the most of passing trade, bosses say. The project will also see the creation of four new parking spaces.

They will be free to use for up to an hour and it's hoped they will encourage people to shop locally.

Transport boss Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said: "We have listened to the views of local traders and are planning to make King Street two-way for traffic.

"The scheme will help local businesses and improve traffic flow through the town, while maintaining facilities for bus passengers with a dedicated bus lane.

"The whole scheme will also be a lot safer for pedestrians walking to and from that part of town, and shows we value the feedback from local shoppers and businesses."

King Street will be opened between its junction with New Mill Street/Union Street and Flood Street/Hall Street.

Around 60 businesses and residents were consulted on the scheme. The council received 10 responses with seven in favour and three against.

## Traffic jams inspired author



First time author Tom Butler, AKA Tommy Trucker, with his horse racing thriller Caught

TRUCKER and author Tom Butler found find inspiration for his debut published novel while clogged in traffic at the wheel of his lorry.

Mr Butler is starting on a journey which he hopes will make his dreams of a literature career come true.

His book, called Caught, which is a thriller set in the world of National Hunt horse racing, has hit the book shelves.

Tom, aged 62, of Dudley Road, Wall Heath, has always had a love for writing,

even while he served a three decade long career with Lloyds Bank. For 13 of those years he worked as a chief cashier at the Wolverhampton branch.

But after deciding leave, he started up his own light haulage company called 'Tommy Trucker' working for firms across the Midlands. Life on the open road was proving quite the tonic for Tom who has been able to devote more time to his writing.

Visit [www.bookguild.co.uk/caught-pr-1424](http://www.bookguild.co.uk/caught-pr-1424) for more details on his book.

# Asbestos led to the death of machinist

A WOMAN who spent her life working as a machinist died from an illness caused by inhaling asbestos.

Patricia Harris from Lower Gornal died at New Cross Hospital on June 16 while undergoing treatment for mesothelioma in her lungs. The condition occurs as a result of exposure to asbestos. The 72-year-old of Maple Drive had been diagnosed with the cancer.

A statement from her daughter Susan Thompson was read at the inquest at Smethwick Council House. She wrote: "She inhaled asbestos dust from metal lagged pipes while she was working at Clifford and Sons in Lower Gornal. During the 1950s and 60s she also worked at Mander Brothers where she said she came into contact with asbestos dust. When she was at Clifford and sons she worked the presses herself and there were a lot of asbestos lagged pipes and asbestos overhead."

A post-mortem found she died of pneumonia brought on by mesothelioma that developed after she inhaled asbestos. Senior Coroner Robin Balmain concluded that she had died of an industrial disease due to exposure to asbestos.

## It's lucky 13 at house team

A COUNCIL housing team are proving thirteen is a lucky number after winning their 13th consecutive gold award for safety.

The housing service's construction team at Dudley Council are among the winners in the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Occupational Health and Safety Awards 2014.

The President's Award for 1 consecutive golds will be presented during a ceremony at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole Hotel, at the National Exhibition Centre, on May 15.

## Cuppa for charity

A CHARITY coffee morning will take place at Oldbury Library on Thursday, April 24, in aid of a local hospice.

The fundraiser will run from 10am until 11.30am and money raised will go to Acorns Children's Hospice.

For details call 0121 552 5933.

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# Tragedy as son chokes to death in his sleep

A MAN died after choking in his sleep while heavily sedated, an inquest heard.

Jon Birks was found unconscious in his bedroom by his family at their home in Pensnett on October 19 last year. Ambulance crews were called but he was declared dead at the scene.

The hearing at Smethwick Council House heard that the 27-year-old, of Heydon Road, had been taking sedatives to help him sleep and had been drinking alcohol the night before he died.

His mother Angela Keilly discovered his body. She told the hearing: "He has choked on his food before and was found just in time by a member of the family and spent three days in hospital. I said to him that night not to eat too late because he knew what had happened before."

A post mortem carried out by Dr Swarna Ghosh, consultant pathologist, at Russells Hall Hospital, found that the 27-year-old had food trapped in his windpipe that had caused him to choke to death.

A high quantity of Quetia-pine was in his system, more than six times the normal dose, which he had been given by doctors to help him sleep. Dr Ghosh said the sedative was a contributing factor in his death.

# Crackdown on rogue traders

TRADING standards officers have joined forces with the police to crack down on rogue traders.

Operation Rogue Trader saw a team of police and trading standards officers carry out a day of action at hotspots in Sandwell, including Cradley Heath. Eleven of 12 traders spoken to by officers were genuine but one ran away before his credentials could be verified.

Sandwell Trading Standards manager Bob Charnley said: "We are sending out a clear message to rogue traders that their activities will not be tolerated."

# Shakespeare on sea

DRAMA group Side-by-Side are rehearsing their version of William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night. The Stourbridge company have renamed the play Ilyria-on-Sea, to be staged at Stourbridge Town Hall from June 25 to 28. Tickets from The French Deli.

# Bunnygirl reveller attacked train passengers



Dressed as a bunny girl, Tanya Oakley

SHE described herself as '10 out of 10' on a scale of drunkenness when she attacked two train passengers she believed were laughing at her - while she wore a bunny girl costume.

Mother-of-four Tanya Oakley thought she had heard a 'disparaging comment' at her expense as she travelled on a train at Birmingham Moor Street after a night of clubbing. The 26-year-old believed a group of people were 'laughing at her'.

She went down the carriage and swung at one woman's mouth and yanked the hair of another, Birmingham Magistrates Court

was told. Oakley, of Best Street, Cradley Heath, was given a conditional discharge lasting 18 months after admitting two charges of common assault on November 2 last year. The train driver was disturbed by the fracas and went back into the carriage to tell everyone to calm down, before telling those involved to get off.

The group including the two women Oakley attacked - who had also been out clubbing - got off the train but Oakley's group jumped back on to continue the journey.

Oakley later saw a CCTV picture of herself which had been released to the media

by police and called officers. Mr Jonathan Purser, prosecuting, said: "In interview she said she left the club with her friends at 5am and on a scale of 1-10 of intoxication, she said she was about a 10."

"At the conclusion of the interview she said she was ashamed of what she had done."

Mr Darryl Foster, defending, said Oakley was 'distracted' at what had happened as she was not a habitual drinker and had 'just gone out to let her hair down'.

Oakley was ordered to pay £25 compensation to the two women she assaulted, as well as £50 costs and a £15 victim surcharge.

# Police hunt thug who used syringe on victim

A NEEDLE carrying thug is being hunted by police after a woman was attacked by a man holding a syringe during a terrifying lunch-time incident in Blackheath.

Police have only recently released details of the attack which left the 28-year-old deeply distressed during weeks of medical tests.

She had driven to Blackheath High Street to Greggs bakery and, as she left, a man who was on his phone and wearing a Sandwell Homes jumper, bumped into her.

# Veterans to be honoured at hall event

ARMED services veterans entitled to badges and medals are being urged to come forward to have their awards presented to them at Armed Forces Day.

Dudley Council has teamed up with Forces Recruitment Services for the event at Himley Hall on June 29, from 11am to 5pm, to include a presentation of medals and badges by the Mayor of Dudley.

John Polychronakis, chief executive at Dudley Council, said: "The event goes from strength to strength each year and we hope this year is no exception. The most important part of the day is celebrating the achievements of local veterans and I would urge anyone entitled to a HM Armed Forces Veterans Badge, Arctic Star and Bomber Command Clasp to come forward and have their badges and medals presented on the day."

Anyone who has already received an armed forces badge but has not had it formally presented to them before, can contact Dudley Council on 01384 818186 to be part of the ceremony.

# Punched

He walked behind her as she returned to her car parked on Short Street. The man punched the victim in the back and walked off towards the High Street. It was then that she noticed he was holding a syringe.

Pc Joe Toon, from Sandwell Police, said: "The woman took off her coat and found that there was a mark of an yellow liquid. It seems her assailant had possibly injected her, or tried to. The incident was deeply distressing for the lady. She has endured weeks of upset and medical tests."

The attacker is aged mid to late 30s, around 5ft 8in tall, of chubby build, bald and was wearing a blue baseball cap. He wore a navy blue jumper with a 'Sandwell Homes' logo and blue trousers.

Pc Toon said officers were attempting to trace the offender and had been in contact with Sandwell Homes.

The attack took place at around 2.15pm on February 26. Two women were attacked with a needle in Walsall in December, mirroring a spate of stabbings in Birmingham last year.

Call Sandwell Police on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

# Head in pledge on school progress



'We are on track' — head teacher Ben Stitchman has set a target at Dormston School, in Mill Bank, Sedgley

A HEADMASTER has vowed to pull a secondary school out of special measures within one academic year.

Dormston School, Mill Bank, Sedgley, was judged 'inadequate' by Ofsted and placed in special measures after an inspection in July 2013. Ben Stitchman was appointed as the headmaster last September and says he is determined to drive up standards.

Mr Stitchman said: "We are aiming to do it in one academic year. I think we are on track and to go from spe-

cial measures to be classed as a good school in one year, which would be ground breaking."

The school was criticised for failing to ensure students made enough progress. Standards were said to be 'too low' in English and mathematics.

Dormston has since received two monitoring visits, both 'positive'.

Mr Stitchman has set a target to pull the school out of special measures by the next Ofsted inspection, due at the start of the next academic year.

If achieved it would be in just over half the time allowed. Mr Stitchman admits the school, with 1,500 pupils aged 11 to 16, has a lot of work to do.

He explained: "There was a lack of expectation but now our improvement is about raising expectations and pushing the students harder to achieve their potential."

"We have a terrific year 11 and the staff are putting a lot of energy into them. We are hoping for our best ever GCSE results this summer."

# NEWS in brief

# Tasty tiger will be star attraction

A LIFE-SIZED cake in the shape of Dudley Zoo's Sumatran tiger Daseep will be a star attraction when new store Oak Furniture Land opens its doors at Merry Hill retail park on Saturday.

The tiger head cake has been made by Midlands cake artist Annabel de Vetter of Conjurers Kitchen and will be on show at the store from 9 to 10.30am.

To celebrate opening the store will also be having an Easter sale on selected items.

# PHP buys Lion centre for £8.5m

PRIMARY Health Properties has bought the new Lion Health Centre in Stourbridge for £8.5 million.

PHP, which has a regional base in Worcester, specialises in investing in health sector properties.

It originally purchased the site including the historic Foster and Rastrick foundry in Bradley Road in 2012.

Construction of the new 27,986 sq ft health centre began in the autumn of 2012.

# Dementia charity night at the bingo

A BINGO night will be held to raise money for Sandwell's Better Understanding of Dementia charity at Mecca Oldbury from 6pm on Saturday. Money raised will be split between the running cost of BUDS, which supports dementia sufferers, and Birmingham Midland Eye Centre.

People attending can pay £20 for a bingo, a meal and bottle of bubbly. Call 0121 565 3721.

# Second chance to discover pondlife

A SECOND pond activity session at a nature reserve in Halesowen has been organised due to high demand.

Children can discover the mini beasts in The Leasowes ponds during the event on Wednesday, April 23, from 1.30pm to 3.30pm. Booking is essential by calling (01384) 814642. Meet at the wardens' base.

# New store opens

A NEW homeware store has opened its doors at the Merry Hill shopping centre creating 30 new jobs.

Danish chain Tiger says it will offer 'quality, inexpensive' items from its new store.

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# THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



MORE on the seven-a-day fruit and vegetable debate. One reader asks whether knowing a Swede counts as one portion. Another reader tells me his lifestyle should qualify as a few portions. He is a couch potato.

ANY bets on how long this fad for seven portions of fruit and vegetables will last before some scientist discovers a dramatic increase in human flatulence is destroying the ozone layer?

SO FAREWELL, Maria Miller. All along, David Cameron insisted the former culture secretary had "done the right thing" when he, she and the whole world knew that the only right thing was resignation. A reader says he recalls that back in 1975 the rock group Queen foresaw David Cameron's long and pointless defence of Miller with a line in Bohemian Rhapsody: "Ms Miller, no! / We will not let her go." Yes, it was something like that.

TONY Blair says politicians should be prepared to start wars – even if the people are against it. He believes the opposition of the people "doesn't invalidate the necessity to intervene." This is breath-taking stuff. If a government goes to war when the people are against it, in whose name are you dropping those bombs? Whose interests are you serving – the interests of an American president, perhaps? Blair is a great gift to conspiracy theorists. When you hear him speak, you could almost believe this world is run in the interests of New World Order organisations like the Illuminati or global banking. What a scary man he is. I interviewed him four times. Never liked him. Never understood his appeal.

"DIGITAL Age Drove Auntie to Dignitas" was a typical headline on the report about an 89-year-old British woman who was allowed to commit suicide at the Dignitas Clinic in Switzerland even though she was neither seriously handicapped nor terminally ill. It seems she was depressed by every modern thing from the rise of ready meals to computers, emails, television, destruction of the environment and "people becoming more and more remote." But while the image of an old lady driven to suicide by the digital age makes great headlines, most reports downplayed a significant fact. The lady, identified only as Anne, had been seriously ill last year and spent 11 days in hospital. She described the experience as "unadulterated hell." I bet that chimes with thousands of elderly folk who have been pitchforked by illness from the ordered serenity of their own homes into the uncaring indignity of a hospital ward full of the sort of people, both patients and staff, that you normally try to avoid. Knowing the future will probably bring more such "unadulterated hell," who wouldn't consider Dignitas? The digital age is painted as the villain in this story but I bet the NHS played a part.

WHEN the Sheffield half-marathon was cancelled because of a shortage of drinking water, I was so proud of my fellow Yorkshirefolk. First, with reet grand Northern disregard for the instructions, the runners ignored the cancellation and carried on running. Secondly, local folk armed themselves with thousands of bottles of mineral water and sold the runners as much as they could buy. Hang on. I have just been told that the locals actually gave the water away, for nowt. Are we absolutely sure this happened in Yorkshire?

WINE wisdom. The Times advises its readers not to order "house white, please" in restaurants but to try: "Have you got a vignier-style aromatic white, the sort you might find in the Dolomites?" And if you do say that, can you guess which word will flash into the mind of the waiter and anyone else within earshot? Rhymes with anchor.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

# It's business as usual at market

MARKET traders in Cradley Heath have insisted it is business as usual after their future was thrown into doubt.

Stallholders at Cradley Heath Market say there is 'no intention' of closing after it was revealed its parent company had gone into receivership.

Businesses at the market, which also includes 22 shop units, were

sent a letter by administrators KPMG informing them that Land-master Ltd had gone into receivership. But market manager Peter Cope has had it confirmed by those managing the receivership that the popular market will not be shutting its doors.

He said: 'I've had it confirmed from my head office in London, who had it confirmed from the receivers

that there's no intention of closing this market whatsoever. As far as we are concerned it is business as usual.

"We are actually taking on new traders. I took on one last week and I'm taking one on next Tuesday who has moved over from West Bromwich market, selling greetings cards."

The market, known as the 'big

market', is running offers to attract more traders and to more businesses into the vacant shop units.

Mr Cope said: "We are inviting people to come in and view the shop units, and asking them to make offers as opposed to us telling them 'this is the rent'."

The market is open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 8am to 4pm.

# The speed cameras are being switched back on

SPEED cameras are back in the Black Country – a year after they were turned off in a move to save money.

Dudley Council has unveiled five new cameras and will pay the £15,000 bill for installation and maintenance. The cameras are positioned in Halesowen, Stourbridge, Gornal Wood and Quarry Bank. Council chiefs said they were put in place in response to 'long-standing requests' from communities.

One of the new cameras is on a 50mph stretch of the Manor Way dual carriageway in Halesowen, where Tipton motorcycleist Nick Foster died in an accident last June.

## Deterrents

John Millar, Dudley Council's director for urban environment, said: "The new units at Thorns Road, Quarry Bank; Manor Way, Halesowen; Coopers Bank Road, Gornal Wood; Old-nall Road, Stourbridge, and Grange Road, Stourbridge are in response to long-standing requests from the community for speeding deterrents.

"The units cost around £3,000 each to install and maintain set against 2014 Department for Transport figures which show the average cost of a serious accident is more than £210,000."

He said West Midlands Police would continue to deal with enforcement.

The cameras were all introduced within the past two weeks.

## Policing post at village

POLICE officers will be based at parish council offices following the closure of a village station.

West Mercia Police has shut the station in New Street, Hagley as part of plans to save £1.5 million a year by 2016.

A 'community policing post' has now been set up at the parish council offices in Worcester Road.

The police base will not be open to the public but the facilities will be used by officers to spend more time in the village. Inspector Sarah Corteen said: "We are pleased to be able to use the parish council facilities, enabling us to continue to strengthen our links with the people of Hagley."

## Mine and mansion walk



Geologist Graham Worton is ready for a walk into the past at Himley Hall

VISITORS have the chance to take a guided tour of Himley Hall's historic parkland, designed by 18th century landscape gardener Capability Brown

Walks will be taking place this spring giving people the chance to learn more about the mansion and its surrounding acres.

A 'walk through time' takes place on April 23. Involving history and geology goes to the last working pit of the South Staffordshire Coalfield, returning via woodland to Himley. Graham Worton, the borough's

geology expert, will lead the walk, starting in the courtyard of the hall at 6.15pm.

People can join the 10km South Staffs Explorer walk on April 30 from 2 to 5pm including Baggeridge and the South Staffs Railway walk. Meet at the main car park. There is an easy access trail on May 10 for wheelchair users and their families to explore the Himley Estate. Meet at the hall from 2pm. On May 25, there will be a guided walk around Himley Hall itself.

Book for the tours on (01384) 817817.

# Memories sought of greengrocer at museum

STAFF at the Black Country Living Museum are piecing together the history of a greengrocer's shop.

They are appealing for people to come forward with their memories.

A building at the attraction's canal side village will be transformed into the shop which was housed at 39 Lower Lichfield Street, Willenhall between around 1916 to 1932. The museum is appealing for information so it can produce an authentic replica.

Research by the museum's collections team to date shows that Gertrude Adey, née Illidge, is listed in the Kelly's Trade Directory as a greengrocer at the original address. She married William Adey in around 1900 and had two children, William A Adey, born circa 1901, and Gertrude M Adey, born circa 1903.

Staff are hoping to get more information about the Adey family, the shop and Lower Lichfield Street during the early 20th century. They are also appealing for photographs of Willenhall and Black Country greengrocer shops, pre-1960. Get in touch by email at info@bcm.com or call 0121 557 9643 by April 28. Include name, telephone number and outline the information.

## A busy first year at centre

THERE have been celebrations at Tipton Leisure Centre where staff have marked its first anniversary.

More than 230,000 visitors has been through the doors since it opened last year. The centre now has more than 7,500 members using pools, gym and fitness classes.

The £8 million centre, which opened last April, was the first built in Sandwell since the 1970s and replaced a 1930s swimming pool. The centre, at the junction of Alexandra Road and Thursfield Road, has a 25-metre, six-lane pool.

## Home brews only

A BREWERY will only serve ales brewed in the Black Country at its 20 pubs over a weekend to celebrate the region's heritage. Black Country Ales, based in Lower Gornal, will stage the event from July 11 to 14 to tie-in with official Black Country Day on July 14.

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## New block teaching scheme at college

A TEACHING block for students with learning difficulties will be built under plans unveiled by a college.

Birmingham Metropolitan College want to open the single-storey 'showroom' for students next to its existing Brierley Hill campus in Venture Way by September. The block will also include three small classrooms and a space for team activities.

The college, which took the name of Stourbridge College following a merger last year, has lodged a planning application for the building with Dudley Council.

BPN Architects said the proposal was part of an aim by the college to provide dedicated teaching for students with learning difficulties. The facility will enable the college to teach students how to live independently in the community, centred around a purpose-built independent living unit.

The building would provide a showroom-style kitchen, bathroom, bedroom and other living areas. A living area in the block will double up as a quiet room for students on the campus.

The building will be on the campus' car park and will reduce the spaces available from 78 to 69.

## Choirs team up at concert

TWO choirs united for a concert in Dudley Town Hall when more than 100 choristers from Viva Musica and Gentlemen Songsters Male Voice Choir performed.

Each choirs sang a selection from its own repertoire and three items together as a massed mixed-voice choir. Michael Collie of BBC Midlands Today was compere. The performance in front of a 1,000 raised money for charities, including Parkinson's UK and the Mayor of Dudley's Charity Appeal. Information on the choirs is available at [www.viva-musica.co.uk](http://www.viva-musica.co.uk) and [www.gsmvc.org.uk](http://www.gsmvc.org.uk)

## Canal clean up

VOLUNTEERS are needed for a canal spring clean. The Canal and River Trust want helpers for its clean up at Birmingham Main Line Canal, Tipton, on Saturday, April 26. Meet at Caggys Boatyard, Watery Lane, at 10am. See [canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk) or call 03030 404040.

# Prison for care boss who stole from resident



Sharon Raybould

A CARER who stole more than £9,000 from a disabled resident unable to care for himself has been jailed for nine months.

Sharon Raybould was acting manager at the Pathways Care Group home, Woodsetton, when she took the money from the account of the 53-year-old over a period of nearly two years.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard the man was unable to communicate and had no family to look after his affairs.

As management, Raybould had access to his bank card and PIN number. But she betrayed this trust between May 28, 2011, and March 28, 2013, taking out £9,260. The court was told she made 80 such transactions.

Mr Kevin Jones, prosecuting, said when money was taken out it was usually entered into a log but Raybould had either not entered information or recorded smaller sums.

Raybould, 42, of Beacon Lane, Sedgley, pleaded guilty to one count

of theft at a previous hearing. Mr Jones said that after she left the home in 2013 the new manager had noticed discrepancies.

"When interviewed by police she admitted what she had done," added Mr Jones.

Mr Simon Hanns, defending, said his client was of previous good character.

"She is remorseful for what she has done and has admitted this money was used to top up her own financial difficulties. She is the sole

carer for her partner and his son and if given an immediate custodial sentence it would have a major impact on the family."

Recorder Phillip Shears QC said a jail term was 'inevitable' given the severity of what she had done.

A spokesman for Pathways Care Group said: "Her behaviour fell well below the high standards we expect from our staff in protecting and supporting vulnerable adults in our care. We therefore fully welcome the court's decision and the sentence."

# Dedicated team is tackling the neighbours from hell

**MORE than 1,000 cases of anti-social behaviour in Dudley have been dealt with by a specialist team set up to investigate complaints.**

As a result there have been two evictions and four injunctions, which aim to prevent further problems. Some of the investigations have also led to warning letters being sent to troublemakers or noise abatement orders being issued.

Dudley Council says the dedicated team has allowed it to provide a better service.

Councillor Steve Waltho, cabinet member for housing and community safety, said: "One year ago this month we changed how we dealt with anti-social behaviour. Previously people who were suffering from neighbourhood nuisance were put in touch with different teams, depending on their issue.

"We now have just one team of 19 anti-social behaviour specialists, drawn from across the country, who are experts in their field. The simplicity of this approach and the extra skills that we now offer is benefiting our residents. No-one should have to live in constant fear.

"If you are suffering from persistent noise nuisance, harassment, or anything else that is negatively affecting your life, give the anti-social behaviour team a call."

One of the people who benefited said: "I lived through an absolute nightmare. Every single day I was intimidated, threatened and shouted at and I reached the end of my tether. The anti-social behaviour team was brilliant. It wasn't a quick fix because of all the processes that needed to be gone through but I was advised and supported. Thanks to their actions I am now living a normal life again."

For more information call Dudley Council Plus on 0300 555 2345.

"They offer instant, interesting and fun information in an easy-to-read format about individual species within the collection."

Peter Suddock, chief executive at the zoo said the signage project will transform the site. He added: "The whole site is to be re-signed. The signs will also provide clear and simple information about our animals."

## England fans' goal is World Cup anthem



World Cup songwriters Ken and Deb Harris with singer Jon Allen are seeking online support from England fans

SONGWRITERS Ken and Debbie Harris are hoping to represent England fans' World Cup hopes in song with one of five tunes they have entered in a contest to find an anthem for Brazil 2014.

The couple, from Shepherds Brook Road, Lye, are now urging Black Country people to kick-start their 2014 World Cup song bid by voting for one of their entries online.

Their song Whole Wide World is proving popular in the ratings for the

competition to find a song for Brazil 2014. The pair, both 41, write under the name of Stormforce Music and are football fans, with Ken supporting Arsenal and teaching assistant Debbie following England.

"Our latest song — Here We Go Again — should strike a chord with many England supporters," said Ken, who works in IT.

"I'm proud of this song because we believe fans can relate to it after all the years of disappointment.

"Yes, we have a lot of heartbreak over the many years since 1966, but there is always hope. I've been an England fan all my life. The ultimate dream would be for a music publisher to come along to make it the unofficial England song."

The songs were recorded at Raindance Music Studio, Stourbridge. Whole Wide World is sung by Jon Allen, from Brierley Hill.

The competition works on rankings at [www.worldcupsong.com/index.htm](http://www.worldcupsong.com/index.htm)

## NEWS in brief

### Rock show for mayor's charities

MUSICIANS are hoping to hit the high notes for a charity gig taking place in the Midlands next month.

Tickets have gone on sale for the Rock and Roll Showcase which will be held in aid of the Mayor of Dudley's charities.

The bands Purple Stereo and The Oldest House will be taking to the stage at The Secret Venue, Pearson Street, Dudley, on May 10 from 7pm. Tickets cost £8, £6 for students, available by emailing [suzylimesdc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:suzylimesdc@hotmail.co.uk)

### Labour councillor defending seat

A LABOUR councillor has been selected to defend her seat at next month's local elections.

Kingswinford North and Wall Heath Councillor Lynn Boleyn was first elected onto Dudley Council eight years ago and she hopes to retain her seat on May 22.

She has campaigned for 20mph speed restrictions in her ward and to save Maidensbridge Primary School, where she has been a governor for 12 years.

### More time for children to play

CHILDREN will have even more time to play after session times were extended at a leisure centre.

Youngsters aged seven and under can enjoy the soft play suite at Stourbridge's Crystal Leisure Centre every day and opening times have been extended on Mondays and Wednesdays. Sessions costs £4 for a parent and two children. Weekend sessions are 9.30am to 12.30pm.

### Pair deny pub attack on man

TWO men have denied assault. Luke Walker, aged 26, of Gayfield Avenue, and Luke Seeley, 25, of Channon Drive, both Withymoor Village, pleaded not guilty to assault causing actual bodily harm at the Tenth Lock pub, Brierley Hill, on November 9. They were given conditional bail until trial at Wolverhampton Crown Court in July.

### Arsonists blamed

ARSONISTS are being blamed for two small at the former Longlands School in Brook Street, Stourbridge, at 9.30pm on Friday. A neighbour said she had reported youths breaking into the school.

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IN MY VIEW

WITH MARK ANDREWS



IN THE age of text-speak, Twitter and whatever other means youngsters use to communicate today, teachers really have their work cut out trying to instil the importance of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

But while it probably won't ever make it onto the National Curriculum, the story about the sign outside a pub in Cornwall is a lesson for every youngster who can't be bothered with all that boring stuff.

'The Wig & Pen is open for business' is what the sign should have said. However, the sign-writer somehow got it wrong, forgetting to leave a space between the 'pen' and the 'is'.

And that's the trouble. Learning boring old rules about sentence structure and non-phonetic spelling seems terribly boring and old-fashioned when you're 14. But ignoring it can leave you looking like a right 'pen is'.

□□□□□

A TABLOID report this week claimed that half a million patients who received cosmetic surgery are now at risk of black-mail.

Apparently, thousands of women who had breast implant surgery, or 'boob jobs' as they are known in the trade, are now at risk of having their secret exposed. So to speak.

Just a thought. If your 'boob job' is so secret that nobody knows about it, well, it can't really have worked, can it?

□□□□□

A COUPLE of years ago, I interviewed a fellow who told me how his in-laws did not speak to one another when he first got married.

"The one side of the family was from Colley Gate, and the other was from Cradley, and for a while they didn't speak to one another because I had married a 'foreigner'," he said.

For those not familiar with this part of the world, Colley Gate and Cradley are about a mile apart.

Times have changed, but the story illustrates the futility of trying to create a 'Greater Birmingham city region', which has been rearing its head again lately.

And while we're on the subject, why do public authorities persist with banging on about the 'four Black Country boroughs'?

The Black Country is a loosely-defined concept which has been around for centuries. It is nothing to do with 1970s local government boundaries.

Government, both central and local should stick to sorting out the economy, maintaining order and emptying the bins.

And not delude itself into believing that you can change ancient identities with a few new signs.



Rocking Ruby – the star with Kevin Robbins



The boxing hero outside the Marbles premises



Ruby with Karen Jerrison from West Bromwich

# A Frank message on mental illness

Two celebrities have joined together with a local charity to highlight the problems of living with mental illness

**HE made his career fighting his way to the top of the boxing world and now Frank Bruno is encouraging mental illness sufferers to stop fighting their feelings and open up instead.**

"There is no need to struggle alone or in silence" the former heavyweight champion said during a visit to a Black Country mental health charity.

He told sufferers it was time to take down their barriers and speak openly about their problems.

The retired sportsman was joined by comedian Ruby Wax at a chat show style debate organised by Marbles, a charity which promotes good mental health and aims to de-stigmatisate perceptions that surround sufferers.

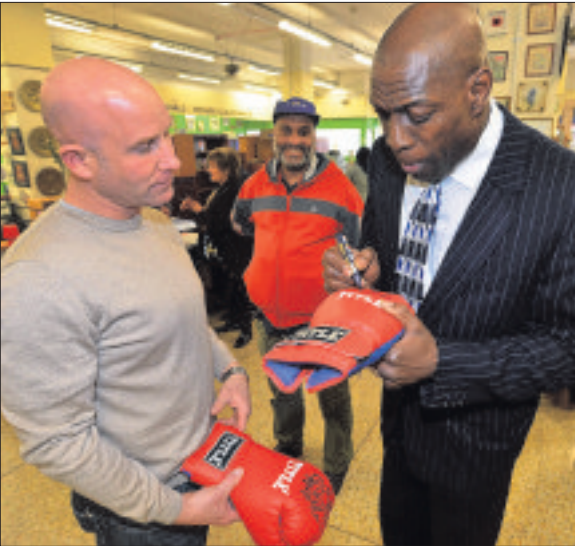
It was held at the charity's second hand furniture warehouse in Great Bridge last Tuesdya, and followed by a book signing with more than 70 visitors attending to hear the stars talk about their personal struggles.

The ex-boxer, who has battled with bi-polar disorder since 2003 and has had spells in hospital, said: "Since I have been open about my struggle I hope it has inspired people, not just men, to come forward and not be afraid.

"Mental health problems can happen to anyone. I want to encourage people to talk about how they are feeling, don't fight it.

"There is no need to struggle alone or in silence. Men struggle with pride and stress over what people might say but that adds more pressure.

"Don't fight against your feelings, let them out. There is help available.



Frank signs boxing gloves for St George's parade fundraiser Mark Cowles

He added: "Marbles is a very good charity. I am very privileged and honoured to be invited here today and hope to help the charity more in the future."

For many years, the 52-year-old has been a champion for mental health awareness and has met with Government ministers to help get better treatment for sufferers.

American author, comedienne and chat show host Ruby Wax told the audience how depression would overcome her 'like a tidal wave' and talked about society's belief there is a quick fix to de-

pression. She said: "Everyone wants an instant pill but you can't get a six pack by only doing one sit up."

"You wouldn't tell a diabetic to come off their insulin so why do people think it's okay to tell someone with a mental health issue to get off the drugs or cheer up?"

"It is a disease where people don't know how to treat you or speak to you and because of this sufferers feel ashamed, on top of stress on top of shame and it drives you wild."

She added: "It is a real honour to be

asked here. This is how people should act about mental health, talk openly and have a support network. So many people do not have the support that this fantastic group offers."

"At first, I would never have told anyone about my mental illness, I was scared I would get fired.

"Comic Relief took a promotional picture of me and put into tube stations with the title 'One in four people have mental health problems and one in four have dandruff – I have both'. I became the poster girl for mental health and I toured with my routine in mental health hospitals for two years."

The two celebrities were joined by representatives from groups including Mind, Sandwell Mental Health, Time For Change and In2Work.

Kevin Robbins set up Marbles in 2005 after struggling to come to terms with his own bi-polar disorder.

He said: "The name of the charity has a deeper meaning than simply a play on the phrase 'he has lost his marbles'.

"It is because inside a marble is a fine line and with mental health it doesn't take much to cross over that fine line."

He added: "Hearing our two celebrities talk about their experiences will hopefully spread our key message, that there is a fine line at any one time between being well and not.

"We want people to know they can talk openly and we want to get rid of the stigma attached to mental health issues.

"Not even a sporting champion or celebrity is immune from it, mental health can affect anyone at any time."

One service user, who did not wish to be named, said: "Last year I had a major mental health breakdown but the support I received from the Marbles family gave me a new chance and helped me build my confidence to be more open about my condition."

For more information on Marbles or to donate unwanted furniture or household goods call 0121 525 8064 or visit [www.marblesandwell.co.uk](http://www.marblesandwell.co.uk)

POLITICS

WITH DANIEL WAINWRIGHT



THERE was a bigger scandal than the resignation of Maria Miller as Culture Secretary; the sacking of Michael Fabricant as a Conservative party vice chair-man.

The always-entertaining blond bombshell that is Lichfield MP 'Mickey Fab' was dropped because he is about to lead a rebellion of Tories concerned about the route of the planned high speed rail line. But the final straw that saw him stripped of his prominent role was his remarks about Mrs Miller.

On the day Willenhall-born Mrs Miller finally bowed to public and political pressure to go over her expenses claims, Mr Fabricant said on Twitter that it was 'about time'.

And when the party asked him if he'd stand aside for that, he stood his ground. Resignation, Fabio says, would imply he thought he'd done something wrong. And he doesn't think he has.

His more long-term disagreement with his party leaders, over HS2, is not unique to the MP. Both Staffordshire County Council and Lichfield District Council are formally opposed to the line and both are controlled by the Tories.

The Fabricant affair is actually a far more troubling one for the Tories than the Maria Miller one. Or, at least, it ought to be.

What the party effectively says to its members, as they start campaigning for the council and European elections is this: Claim thousands of pounds more than you should have from the taxpayer for your second home and then make a 32-second perfunctory apology for your attitude and you'll have the full backing of your leader.

But speak your mind as well as the views of the majority of the country and your constituents on a matter of trust and integrity in politics as well as a hugely costly and controversial piece of infrastructure and you're sacked.

□□□□□

Ed Miliband is still adamant that the country is in a 'cost of living crisis'. His solution is to promise to devolve £20 billion of taxpayers' money held in Whitehall to city and county regions. This means eventual investment in infrastructure and skills, eventually meaning more businesses create jobs, eventually meaning people have more money to spend.

Meanwhile, on the way back to the office from Birmingham, where Mr Miliband made that announcement, a lady on the Midland Metro grumbled at the £5.70 cost of her return ticket.

She hadn't had the benefit of sitting and listening to Ed Miliband speak at length about the 'cost of living crisis' before he was chauffeured away in a Land Rover.

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## Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. "Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people

money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole.'

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding

area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people



I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

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## Can't see how police were wronged

ONCE again I am amazed by the money being given to public sector workers, following on from the fiasco of women cleaners being compensated for not being paid the same as bin men by Birmingham Council.

We now are faced with having to pay compensation to police officers who were forced to take retirement, having earned it by serving for 30 years plus.

Whilst I have the greatest respect for police officers who do a hard and often dangerous job, I fail to see that they have been wronged, and many of us in the private sec-

tor can only look on with envy at the £71.3m paid out in lump sums plus an index linked pension averaging over £20,000 per annum.

Rather than add expensive court costs to all this, maybe it would be better if the officers who feel that retirement was forced upon them to let them return to work but allow them to keep the monthly payments they have so far received, just returning the lump sum until they are ready to retire.

**R GWILLIAMS**  
Brierley Hill

## Move the bollards out of square

I READ with disbelief the letter from B Etheridge, I presume the UKIP representative, regarding Stone Street Square.

Anyone with proper knowledge of local politics knows that the project was the brainchild of Cyril Woodall during the last Labour administration in Dudley, when they were allowed to spend a fortune of our money.

If Labour had their way it would have been worse and would have housed the centroph. I was the only councillor out of the 14 at the then Central Area Committee who voted for its placement in the corner, still marked out. They refused to second my nomination for its placement in Coronation Gardens which we in the Royal British Legion fought hard to secure.

Stone Street should house the same amount of vehicles it always did by just pulling up the bollards encompassing an area used less than once a year since its disastrous introduction.

**M DAVIS**  
Kates Hill

## LETTERS to the Editor

### POST

Dudley Chronicle,  
Chronicle Editorial,  
51-53 Queen Street  
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

### E-MAIL

Dudley.chron  
@expressandstar.co.uk

## There's no dog poop problem at this park

I WOULD like to reply to the letter printed in the Dudley Chronicle, written by T Davies, of Dudley, regarding dogs in the park at Wall Heath.

May I say that having lived in Albion Street overlooking the park for some years, I have never once had one whiff of dog poo and neither have my neighbours when I have spoken to them regarding this matter.

I am at a loss to think how T Davies has reached this conclusion but would strongly recommend him visiting his local clinic to ensure that all is well with his sense of smell.

I look over the park very often during the day, and must say that the majority of people are very responsible at keeping their dogs

under control and always clean up after them too.

Many lovely dogs and their owners use the park, meeting up for a stroll on a daily basis, indeed it is the heart of our community here in our lovely village.

I do wonder when I read small minded comments from people, if they genuinely have nothing better to do with their time?

Perhaps T Davies should therefore stay in Dudley where he lives — or if he dare venture onto our beautiful park, try wearing a peg on his nose if that will solve his issue, as no one else seems to have a problem!

**J JONES**  
Wall Heath

## No respect for cortege

WHEN I was a child, walking with my brother and granddad, and we saw a funeral approaching, they would remove their caps until it had passed by. My brother was only six and I was five, but we learnt that was the right thing to do to show respect.

In the last week, I have attended three funerals and I noticed the lack of respect shown to the cortege as it drives from the church to the crematorium. Drivers show no respect to the funeral cars, they pulled out in between the cortege and family car, thus splitting the procession, even overtaking the cortege.

Surely they could have shown a bit of respect for the families at such sad times.

I sincerely hope that when their day comes, they get shown the same respect.

**H SPITTLE**  
Dudley

## Buses used to run on time

JUST to let you know about buses on our estate — they are a joke. A few of us waited over an hour on Tuesday night for the 276 to come in from Merry Hill.

The X96 has to come from the same area of Merry Hill and that can get to the bus station on time. Tuesday night we saw six 246 come in and go out and five buses 'Out of Service' on the front of them.

There is never no one to speak to at Stourbridge Bus Station. It was better with the 294-295, at least they ran on time.

**S J ROBERTS**  
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David Harris who is retiring after 50 years at the business with family in the background



Major Harris in his civvies, who started the business



Dave with staff and family members outside the West Bromwich hairdressers



Dave's father Rees Harris seen in his uniform

# Hair to historic family business finally cuts ties after 50 years

FROM quiffs to short back and sides, a barbers shop with proud roots in the Black Country has been styling menfolk for more than 100 years.

But Harris Hairdressers in West Bromwich has delivered its last cut as the shop has now closed down, with the retirement of its boss after his own 50 years in the trade.

Dave Harris is the third generation of his family to cut hair in the Sandwell borough following on from his father and grandfather before him. And during that time they have styled generations of boys and men.

He has been at the business since 1964 and the 65-year-old has now decided the time has come to retire.

"I have been cutting hair here since I left school aged 15 and I have seen this area of West Bromwich change a lot over the years and I have had a lot of customers come and go," he said. Dave took on the shop from

## MEMORY LANE

By Tom Mason

his father, Rees Harris, who opened up the barber's in Stone Cross in 1956.

The founder of the business, Dave's grandfather, Major Harris, decided to set up business in the Black Country in 1900 and opened the family's original salon in St Michael's Street.

He continued to work out of the shop until his death in 1942. During this time he had three sons Des, Bill and Rees, who were all taught to cut hair and drafted into the family business from school aged 14.

During the Second World War Dave's father joined up to fight with the South Staffordshire Regiment, before eventually being re-assigned to the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders.

Dave said: "He never spoke about his time in the war. He would always just ask why we would want to know about that. He

taught me everything I know and he was taught by his dad before that."

After the war he spent some time in Edinburgh before finally returning home and returning to his father's shop in central West Bromwich.

Soon after he returned, the three Harris brothers got together and began a hair-dressing empire in the borough, eventually opening three shops in West Bromwich, including the current shop in Beverley Road, where Dave and his father have spent the last five decades working in.

His father continued to work in the shop well into his 70's. He died at the age of 85 in 2004. And although the barbers has shut for the last time, Dave hopes to keep cutting hair part-time and has set up a mobile service for his oldest and loyalist customers. The great-grandfather-of-two said: "There is a lot more competition these days and business isn't quite what it used to be and I felt it was time to close up the shop and retire."

"It's weird I have seen hairstyles come

and go, but now I am seeing a return to the styles that I did when I first started."

"Lots of kids come in asking for quiffs, I really enjoy doing the older styles. I've loved every day working here. I will miss coming in," said Dave, who lives in Stourport.

His family have joined in his retirement celebrations, presenting him with a cake and champagne at the salon.

He said: "I really didn't expect to be surprised by family like that. I had only just started sweeping up when they burst in with cake and champagne."

His wife Margaret said: "He isn't a very showy person, so he's been so surprised by everything."

His son-in-law Neil Beddard, 53, used to have his hair cut at the salon when he was a youngster.

"As a child I used to come here and get my hair cut."

"All my sons and my grandson have had their hair cut by Dave, he always does a good job and he is so well known locally. I'm sure he will be missed."

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# Fundraising to bring tragic Elle back home

FATE dealt a cruel blow to kind, intelligent school-girl Elle Davidson, who had gained A\* grades in her GCSEs and was bound for university at Oxford or Cambridge.

The Kingswinford teenager was struck down by a brain condition last year which has left her confined to a wheelchair and unable to communicate. Friends and family are now trying to raise £80,000 needed for adaptations to the 17-year-old's home.

At the moment she and her mother, Leah, live at a rehabilitation centre in Surrey. Her father Phil has to come home to the Black Country to work and is only able to join his family at the weekend. The adaptations would mean Elle could come home for the first time since she was struck down.

## Collapsed

The nightmare started for Wolverhampton Girls' High School, student Elle on January 12, 2013, when she collapsed with severe head pain. Her mother took her to Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital where it was originally thought she was suffering from stress and she was discharged the next day.

But when the same thing happened two days later a CT scan was carried out and Elle was rushed to Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Tests revealed she had a brain condition called AVM which she had been born with it but did not know about until she was taken ill.

Elle had two small bleeds to the brain and operations were carried out. She later had a stroke and two heart attacks. She needed a shunt fitted to drain brain fluid and a metal plate to replace the area of her skull which had to be removed. Tests have shown the youngster is now unable to see.



'Elle's Angels' who are aiming to raise £80,000 so Elle Davidson can come home



'Kindest, sweetest girl' — teenager Elle before she was struck down

Family friend Louise Evans said a charity ball is being held on May 10 at the Mill Hotel, Alveley, near Bridgnorth, to help raise money for the home adaptations. Tickets are £40 including a three-course meal, live band, DJ and auction. Call Lloyd Sutton on 07770836008 for tickets.

Louise said: "What happened to Elle was tragic. She was the kindest,

sweetest girl you could meet. She was the top in all her subjects and had awards for being the best pupil.

"We are trying to secure the money needed for these adaptations so Elle can come home and be with her whole family."

An appeal has also gone out to any tradesmen who would be willing to help with the work.

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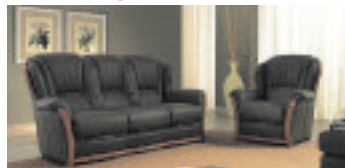
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Steven, whose clinics attracts patients from as far as Spain, the Isle of Skye and the Isle of Anglesey, adds: "The denture revolution is evolving at a frightening pace."

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It's hard to imagine that his retired assembly worker could ever be knocked back. But failing teeth "became an embarrassment,"

she recalls. Recently she was fitted with implant-retained dentures, inspired by a newspaper article on Steven Burchell's work at the Denture Clinic.

She says: "You don't realise how having bad teeth can affect you until you have treatment like this and you get the confidence back. The whole shape of my mouth has changed. I could not have wished for better treatment. My care was first class and Steven has become like family to us."

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## Bear facts about teddy collection

KINGSWINFORD  
LADIES SOCIAL  
CIRCLE

CHAIRMAN Sheila Evans welcomed all member, two visitors and speaker David Chatterly, to the April 3 meeting.

The business agenda was read, approved and signed.

Thank you messages were read out from Val, Nadine and Iris, who are recovering from illness.

Arrangements for the trip to Ros Labels Fashion Outlet and then on to Symonds Yat Leisure Park in Herefordshire have been finalised and it will take place on September 11.

David Chatterly introduced himself as an arctophile, a collector of teddy bears.

He gave a comprehensive history of these toys emphasising the changing characteristics, material from mohair to nylon, sawdust stuffing to kapok, static to moving limbs, wooden eyes to glass and differing facial expressions.

He demonstrated these changes by showing several bears from his large collection. They included Steiff, Chad Valley, Merry Thought and Pixie Toys which were made in Stourbridge.

The final teddy bear was about two inches long, and lived in a brass tin case also containing a union flag and buttons. These were made in 1914 and given by wives and sweethearts to their men going to war.

Sylvia Fletcher gave the vote of thanks and two ladies won a raffle prize.

## Guided tour follows handover of cheque



Guild members with Sue Beesley and Amanda Cox at Acorns Hospice

THREE members from Great Wyrley TG visited Acorns Hospice in Walsall to present a cheque for £200. The money had been collected by the guild in donations in lieu of Christmas Cards.

The ladies were given refreshments and a guided tour of the centre by community

GREAT WYRLEY TG

team worker Sue Beesley and then were introduced to Amanda Cox who is a fund-raising administrator. Bette Webb, chairman of the TG then presented the cheque to Amanda.

## Members are given food for thought with an A-Z of trivia

WALSALL CENTRAL

ON March 27, 18 members of WCTWG attended the Federation South Staffs Branch Annual Dinner at the Masonic Hall, Aldridge.

CTWG's 18 ladies proved to be the highest representation, percentage wise, of all branches attending.

The chairman of the South Staffs Federation, Pat White, a member of WCTWG, chaired the evening and announced that an invitation had been


sent to Sue Smith, the former national chairman, who was unable to attend as she was actually at Buckingham Palace receiving an OBE for her services to TWG.

Following the meal great entertainment was provided by comedian Doug Parker.



Chairman Pat Jones opened the April 1 meeting and following business mat-

ters, introduced the speaker for the evening, Jane Phillips. Jane is presently teaching a modern form of home economics, including cooking, at Queen Mary's Grammar School for Boys.

Jean's subject was A-Z of food trivia and among the many facts learned was the origin of the simple sandwich, the anti-bacterial qualities of honey and that teabags are not available to buy in Japan.



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# Defibrillator move by school after rugby death



Life-saver — a defibrillator for use in emergencies is presented to students and staff at the ACE Academy in Tipton

**A LIFE-SAVING** defibrillator has been presented to a school following the death of a rugby player during a match in Worcestershire.

ACE Academy in Tipton was given the equipment, to help people having a heart attack, as part of a national campaign.

The move followed the death of 15-year-old Luke Chapman, who collapsed while playing for Hagley's Haybridge High School at Kidderminster Baxter College in March last year.

It later emerged he died from Sudden Adult Death Syndrome.

Richard Rainbird-Hitchins, pupil co-ordinator at the 1,400 pupil school, said: "After hearing about Luke, we wanted to make sure that if we ever had the same situation at the school, we had the equipment in place to try and save a life."

Luke, of Meadowcroft, Hagley, was playing for his school when he died on March 20.

He also played youth rugby at Old Halesonians Rugby Club. The club now has defibrillators and a first aider at home and away matches.



Sudden death — Luke Chapman



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## Could do better, says school report

FIGURES reveal for schools rated as outstanding or good across the Black Country, only one borough scores higher than the national average.

Sandwell finished top of the class after figures from the cabinet office showed that 81 per cent of Ofsted inspected schools in the borough were rated as good or outstanding. The national average is 80 per cent. Dudley had 70 per cent, both Walsall and Wolverhampton had 66 per cent.

Dudley children's services boss Councillor Tim Crumpton said: "Approximately 75 per cent of our schools have been inspected as being good or outstanding. We are working with all of our schools to achieve our ambition of every school in the borough being a good school."

# Day to remember Black Country history in industry and war

**THE Zeppelin raids of the First World War, a foundry which blazed a trail in the birth of steam power, and a world-famous engineering group will all come under the spotlight at this year's Black Country History Day.**

The event, a partnership between the Black Country Society and Birmingham University, will be held on October 18. In its ninth year, the day will be held at the university's arts building. There will be a series of talks during the event.

Wednesbury historian Paul Phantom will pres-

ent a lecture on the air raids in 1916, which left 34 people dead across the Black Country.

Joanne Krawec, will talk about her research into the history of Darlaston's internationally renowned Rubery Owen engineering works, the world's largest privately owned engineering company in the 1960s.

The company was founded in Booth Street, Darlaston, by John Turner Rubery in 1884, and nine years later he was joined by engineer Alfred Owen. In its 1960s heyday the company employed 15,000 people worldwide, making products from earthmovers to welding equip-

ment but was probably best known for the Ro-style car wheel trims.

George Demidowic, an honorary research fellow at Birmingham University, will talk about the Soho foundry, founded by James Watt and Matthew Boulton in 1796. Watt's improvements to the Newcomen steam engine — first used at Dudley's Conegre Coalworks in 1712 — were driving forces behind the industrial revolution. Also on the programme will be Helen Donaldson from Dudley's new archive centre.

To find out more email the university's Malcolm Dick on M.M.Dick@Bham.ac.uk

## Council say 'let there be light'

A GRADE II listed church will be lit up at night under new plans to showcase a town's heritage. Dudley Council wants to install lighting outside St Edmund King and Martyr Church in Castle Street.

The church illuminations will cost the council 45p a night, if approved by planning officers.

John Millar, director at Dudley Council, said: "The idea is to use energy-efficient LED lights to highlight some of the most attractive buildings in the town centre. We hope that this project will encourage people to recognise and feel proud of Dudley's heritage, while encouraging a town centre night culture and economy."

The initiative is part of the council's £6.7m regeneration project to breathe new life into Dudley town centre.

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## Loyalty makes worker a cut above at firm



Andrew McIntyre celebrates 25 years service with colleagues

HE joined to earn some 'much-needed cash' and, 25 years on, Andrew McIntyre is still cutting mesh for the same family firm.

The 47-year-old can remember his first day at R&J Mesh in Brierley Hill and admits 'time has flown by'.

Mr McIntyre has been praised by managing director Matthew Harris, who described the father-of-one as a loyal and passionate worker.

Andrew, who lives in Dudley, said: "I studied at Dudley School and did various bits and bobs but needed some cash after the birth of my first child."

"I got the job and I remember the then owner telling me it was going to be hard but I actually found it quite easy as I was fit then."

The firm brings in metal mesh from manufacturers in Sheffield before cutting it up and selling it locally. It has nine staff.

Mr Harris said: "Andrew has been a great worker. He rarely takes a day off and has experience other people can learn from."

## Fourth lane opens to end M6 misery

ALMOST two years of misery for motorists are ending with the opening up of four lanes on a busy stretch of the M6 motorway is finally completed.

Work has been ongoing to open up a fourth lane between junctions five and eight as part of a £126 million scheme. The hard shoulder will now be open at peak times in the mornings and evenings in a bid to ease congestion.

Speed restrictions of 50mph have been in place during the roadworks, adding time to journeys on one of the busiest stretches of motorway in the West Midlands. The motorway's three lanes were also narrowed during the work.

The Highways Agency has undertaken the project, which began in June 2012 between junction five for Castle Bromwich and eight for the M5 link at West Bromwich.

Two months ago the 50mph restrictions were lifted between junctions eight and six. Now the final few miles between junctions five and six will be fully operational.



# Family's sad farewell to bus tragedy victim, 69

'YOU were an amazing father, you will be badly missed by everyone' – the tearful last words to a pensioner from his devastated family.

Grandfather Michael Wilkinson, aged 69, was struck by a bus while walking across a road in Dudley town centre.

He was hit by the single-decker as he crossed King Street to meet his son Stuart after parking his car in Flood Street on March 24 at 1.15pm. He was taken to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham but died the following day.

## Tribute

He leaves behind widow Ann and children Stuart and Tracy. They spoke of his final moments and paid tribute to the 'kind and hardworking family man'.

As his father lay unconscious in hospital, Stuart, a 44-year-old amusement shop worker, stayed by his side and prayed he would wake up.

"I went back home to get some medication and then returned at 8.30am and was told the life-support machine would be turned off."

"My mother, sister and me sat around him and told him 'you were an amazing father, you will be badly missed by everyone' as we heard the heart monitor beeps die out. It was very, very sad."

Mr Wilkinson was a machine operative at Ewatts in Birmingham Road for 20 years, where he met his future wife Ann. The pair married at St John's Church in Dudley and moved to St Georges Road.

After Stuart and Tracy were born, the couple moved to Hollyhock Road before finally settling in Highfield Road, Kates Hill.

Mr Wilkinson later worked at O-I



Grandfather Michael Wilkinson — a road safety petition has started after his death

Europe on Corngreaves Trading Estate, Cradley, for 12 years, along with his brother Clive. In retirement, Mr Wilkinson enjoyed gardening and holidaying in Devon with his wife.

He had become a grandfather two weeks before his death when Stuart's partner Kelly, 25, gave birth to Darcie.

Stuart said: "He was a kind and hardworking family man. Very active and always tried to help others. You just look at the cards in our house to see how popular he was."

Following Mr Wilkinson's death, a petition has started calling for a safer road layout at King Street.

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## Remarkable comeback by veteran

**Bill Caddick**  
**Newhampton Folk Club**  
COMPLETE with stainless steel screws in his foot and a radiator key for tuning his mandolin, which he bought for £2 — the mandolin not the key — Bill Caddick was back on home turf in the upper room of the Newhampton Inn.

Caddick has been on the folk scene for half a century but he was taken out action, certainly from touring,

for just over a year due to a problem with his foot which has hopefully been solved by surgery.

Raconteur and 12-string guitar player Caddick, from Bilston, was warmly received as he opened with The Song Will Go On which was the first glimpse of his impressive fret work on his guitar, which he segued into the light tune of Donkey Jack from his album Unicorns.

Caddick is a talkative performer and

he entertained between the songs too. His was a remarkable performance considering he was obviously battling a croaky throat. Caddick's offerings included Poor Pig, Winter Fair, Letter To Syracuse and Lili Marlene Walks Away. Towards the end his voice was showing signs of strain and his hand was suffering from cramp but like a true performer he saw the night out and even threw in an encore.

**DANNY FARRAGHER**

## Brass and pride in a gutsy play

**Brassed Off,**  
**Wolverhampton Grand**  
IT took us on a rollercoaster from the pits of despair as a mine faced closure to the heart warming bond that held together the workers.

Strong, gutsy performances in Brass Off came from the men facing the tough decision on whether to take the money or fight and from the wives who stood with placards battling to keep husband in work.

In the fictional northern town of Grimley residents are not only confronting the prospect of unemployment, but also their beloved Colliery Brass Band is in danger of dissolving despite endeavour to reach their ultimate goal of the National Brass Band Championships.

The play brilliantly took us on a traumatic journey with funny and poignant moments. The band, actors and musicians from Shropshire's Jackfield band, were superb. Another local touch were the two grandchildren played by Wombourne youngsters Harry Haden, aged 7, and his five-year-old sister Molly.

**SUE ATTWATER**

## Reviews



The international Tap Factory crew power tapped impressively at the Grand Theatre

## Factory workers let their frenetic feet do the talking

**Tap Factory, Wolverhampton Grand**  
THIS pulsating, frenetic show blended elements of Tap Dogs and Stomp for an exhilarating night of percussion and a style of dance best described as 'extreme tap'.

It takes something special for a show to hold the attention for 90 minutes despite having no storyline and no English dialogue but the eight performers in Tap Factory let their feet do the talking. These guys tapped so fast and so hard that they must have left scorch marks on the stage.

The show had an industrial setting with scaffolding and oil drums stickered with toxic warnings. This became a percussive

playground for performers who could beat a rhythm out of anything. Dance moves brought in elements of acrobatics, gymnastics and African dance.

Props including a step ladder, garden recliner, tin bath and aluminium cans were used by the boiler-suited dancers who created their own soundtrack of relentless rhythm. A clap-along audience participation routine was one of the few lulls.

Star dancers were Jeremie Champagne with his clowning and two times world champion Gilles Guenat with a stunning routine that showed why he is tip top at tap.

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# Union unhappy at ‘murky world’ of uni chiefs’ pay

## Staff are shaken in robbery on a village shop

### Puzzling display as artist marks 40 years



Geoff Tristram, from Wollaston, with some of the art-work that he has produced for a collection of jigsaws

A STOURBRIDGE artist will celebrate 40 years as a professional by staging the first major exhibition of his work.

The display by Stourbridge's Geoff Tristram is being held at Himley Hall, near Dudley.

It is called 40 Years Watching Paint Dry and features work created by Mr Tristram, of Eggington Road, Wollaston, for Ravensburger Puzzles, Trivial Pursuit, the BBC, Penguin Books and Embassy World Snooker.

Mr Tristram has created an estimated 5,000 'serious' paintings and 150,000 cartoons and caricatures. He was also responsible for the cover of UB40's debut album Signing Off.

He will turn 60 this year and was asked to stage the exhibition to mark the occasion.

The exhibition will run until September 7.

It is a chance to see many original works of art which have featured on products sold across the UK and world-wide.

## New strategy for transport across the region

IMPROVING road and rail in the region is a key element of the Black Country's bid for Government money from the Single Local Growth Fund.

It is looking for around £12 million to kick start a string of new projects, including a new railway station in Wolverhampton and a bigger Junction 10 on the M6.

It also aims to improve the Birchley Island junction of the M5 and build a new railway station in Aldridge.

The biggest project, however, would seen nearly £65 million spent on unlogging traffic snarl-ups at Junction 10 of the M6 for Walsall, by increasing the size of the

bridge and roundabout that sit astride the motorway.

The Strategic Plan says current efforts to manage the traffic on the slip roads and the junction are only a temporary solution and that 'a more suitable, permanent solution is required here'.

That means increasing the size of the structure over the M6.

Under the plan some work would begin next year but the main construction work — amounting to £30m a year — would take place between 2017 and 2019.

The road scheme is one of the most ambitious single projects within the Strategic Plan

UNIVERSITIES have been accused of bumping up their chiefs' salaries 'behind closed doors' while students face high fees.

Vice-chancellors across the area are taking home more than Prime Minister David Cameron, with the University and College Union describing senior academic pay awards as a 'murky world'. It comes as students are paying £9,000-a-year in tuition fees.

The University of Wolverhampton's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Geoff Laver, was something of a trailblazer locally as he has taken a pay cut from £183,000 down to £180,000 although it was still more than the PM's salary of £142,500.

Last year Professor Ray Linforth, Vice-Chancellor of University College Birmingham, meanwhile saw his pay shoot up by 20.3 per cent to £243,000 a

**Report by Alex Homer**

year, while Professor David Eastwood at the University of Birmingham enjoyed a 7.5 per cent rise and a salary of £400,000, making him one of the highest paid vice chancellors in the country. At Aston University, Professor Julia King had a 2.2 per cent rise, giving her a salary of £278,000.

It can also be revealed that from April last year, BCU's Vice-Chancellor Professor Clive Allen's remuneration package was £207,563. He took home £138,017 in the previous academic year, having joined on December 1 2012. The university said any change in his pay were made against industry-wide benchmarks and based on his performance in the past 12 months.

UCU regional official, Anne O'Sullivan, said: "Millions of pounds of public money are spent on vice-chancellors' salaries, yet their pay rise is decided behind closed doors with no account-

ability. "The time has come for the lid to be lifted on the murky world of remuneration committees and senior pay in our universities. Students are paying £9,000 a year to study for a degree and they, and the taxpayer, have a right to know why so much of their money is going on paying the vice-chancellor."

Institutions have failed to publish the minutes of meetings of their remuneration committees, where they discuss pay rises, to the union.

Birmingham City University (BCU) was the exception to the rule in that it did send the union minutes, but they were redacted and would not contain details about his salary. The university of Wolverhampton said a request for minutes was refused as they contained personal information and details about salaries were available elsewhere and Aston University said its Vice-Chancellor's pay was also already in the public domain.

ROBBERS burst into a newsagents and punched one member of staff in the face before threatening another with a bottle and making off with cash and cigarettes.

The two male staff members were cleaning and cashing up at McColl's, in High Street, Belbroughton, when the four raiders struck.

They entered through a back door before forcing staff to open a safe.

The robbers, who all had their faces covered, took cash from the safe and the cigarettes from a display behind the till.

One of the staff was grabbed and threatened with a bottle and the other was punched in the face during the incident.

A neck chain was also

stolen from one of the store workers who were pushed into a toilet and ordered to stay there while the robbers escaped the way they had come in.

Officers are still trying to establish exactly how much was stolen.

The robbery took place between 10pm and 10.30pm last Wednesday.

Detective Sergeant Natalie Martin, of North Worcestershire CID, said: "The staff were checked over by an ambulance crew and apart from some bruising they were not injured. However, they were both clearly shaken up."

Contact the North Worcestershire CID on the non-emergency number 101, quoting the incident reference 713-S-010214.

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# College on course for lot more choice

## COMMERCIAL FEATURE

**BIRMINGHAM** Metropolitan College campuses in the Black Country and Kidderminster are offering a host of new courses in September, increasing the choice of study available in the region.

Stourbridge Campus will benefit from a range of additional A Levels including Communications and Culture, Mathematics Mechanics and Statistics, Philosophy, Physical Education, Physics and Religious Studies as well as a Music Technology Certificate.

Hair and Beauty courses are getting a make-over with the introduction of a Barbering Certificate, Creative Beauty Consultancy Diploma Level 2, Hair & Media Make-up Diploma Level 2 and Hairdressing for Colouring Technicians Diploma Level 2.

Mukesh Kumar, Executive Director for Curriculum at Birmingham Metropolitan College, said: "Our aim, as well as improving facilities and investing in our campuses in this area, is to radically improve the choice of courses available for school leavers and adult learners. As well as boosting our A Level offer, we've also introduced new vocational courses across a wide spectrum of areas which complements our existing offer."

### Approval

In the Black Country, other new courses include AAT Accounting, Applied Science, Cisco Networking Academy Extended, Entrance to Construction, Law & Criminology Access to Higher Education, Motorcycle Repair, Outdoor Adventurer, Performing Engineering Operations, Plumbing, Vocational Studies and a new Motorcycle Apprenticeship.

In Kidderminster school leavers can choose from an Animal Management Diploma Level 2 & 3, Countryside Management Diploma Level 3, Introduction to Electronics (Digital Technology) Diploma Level 1 and a Tourism and Events Diploma Level 2.

**NEW PROFESSIONAL SERVICES ACADEMY**  
Birmingham Metropolitan College has launched a Professional Services Academy in the Black Country and Wyre Forest region for A Level students choosing to study qualifications in Law, Finance, Accounting and Business Studies and local legal firm, Thursfields LLP, has given its legal seal of approval by being one of the first local companies to sign up to the partnership.

Thursfields LLP has offices in Kidderminster, Stourport, Worcester and Halesowen and is one of the region's most reputable law firms employing more than 100 staff.

Nigel Davies, Equity Partner, said: "We really liked the idea of a business partnership model which helps students prepare for work by offering them opportunities to develop the crucial skills they need to pursue careers when they leave college. We will be offering students studying at the Stour-



Students at work in one of the classrooms



Thursfields LLP Sign Up for the new Professional Services Academy –

bridge Campus and The Academy at Kidderminster 'on-site' training, mentoring, guru lectures and an internship programme which ultimately should benefit the business, offering us the opportunity to recruit from a pool of talent ready and equipped for work."

Students studying AS/A Levels in Law, Accounting, Economics, Business Studies and Mathematics will have the opportunity to join the Professional Services Academy. Apprentices are also available in Accounting, Business Administration and Legal Studies-BUILDING FUTURES

The £5million investment in refurbishing facilities at the Stourbridge Campus is now underway with the appointment of local Midlands' construction company, Cleggs, who have

committed to providing work experience and apprenticeship opportunities for local students.

The main building will benefit from the ambitious and exciting redevelopment programme which will enhance facilities across the board for students and staff.

John Starmer, Executive Director of Estates at Birmingham Metropolitan College, said: "Our £5m investment in new facilities for students and staff at the Stourbridge Campus on Hagley Road is exciting news for Stourbridge."

It's our aim to create a vibrant, exciting presence by providing high-quality teaching and learning facilities at the heart of the community whilst equipping students with the skills relevant to our local, economic needs."



A picture of the Stourbridge Campus redevelopment reception Interior



# Volunteers are needed to to embark on canal duty

ENSURING boats pass smoothly along waterways and sharing the history of canals is all in a day's work for dedicated volunteers who look after local locks.

Officials from the Canal and River Trust are now looking for more people to take on the role at sites across the Black Country, Staffordshire and Worcestershire. Volunteers are needed at the Bratch Locks in Wombourne, Dudley's Delph Locks and Stourport Locks.

One volunteer is encouraging others to sign up and help saying it is a hugely rewarding role with a number of important responsibilities.

Graham Pugh, 61, of Wombourne, has been volunteering at the Bratch Locks for two years.

He said the main responsibilities of a lock keeper was meeting and greeting boat users and walkers on the locks and answering any questions they may have.

And while it is the responsibility of boat owners to get themselves through the locks, keepers also assist when needed. At busier times they take on a more supervisory role to ensure boats smoothly pass through the locks.

Mr Pugh said: "I have enjoyed hikes for more than 30 years and have walked along the canal tow-paths in the area."

If you would like to become a volunteer lock keeper or are interested in other ways to volunteer visit: [canalrivertrust.org.uk/volunteer](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/volunteer)



Keeper of tradition — volunteer Graham Pugh, of Wombourne, at Delph Locks, Brierley Hill

# Flying the flag for the Black Country

MERCHANDISE including flags and T-shirts is being produced to raise funds for the Black Country Day festival.

Not-for-profit organisation Black Country Festival Events is also selling mugs, key rings and stickers to build funds for the celebrations.

Its treasurer Steve Edwards, who also runs The Only Way is Dudley Facebook page, said all the merchandise bore the new Black Country flag.

## Celebration

"All the profits will go back in to helping put on events on Black Country Day itself - July 14 - and throughout July," said Steve.

Black Country merchandise can be bought through website [www.blackcountryfestivalevents.co.uk](http://www.blackcountryfestivalevents.co.uk) and among the events is a celebration in Stone Street Square in Dudley on July 12.

# Minister in probe call after police lose bomb

THE LOSS of an explosive device suspected of being used in the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings must be 'carefully investigated'.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Theresa Villiers said the revelation that West Midlands Police had lost 35 pieces of evidence, including a bomb, was an 'operational' matter.

During a visit to the West Midlands, she said: "This needs to be carefully investigated to find out how the loss occurred. It's an operational matter for the police rather than me as a minister."

by Daniel Wainwright

Asked for her views on West Midlands Police decision not to hold a new inquiry into the bombings 40 years on, Mrs Villiers said: "The pain and distress for the loved ones of people who died is still very real but this is a matter entirely for the police to decide."

## Died

Bombs exploded at the Mulberry Bush and Tavern in the Town pubs in Birmingham in November 1974. Twenty-one people died and 182 were injured.

The so-called Birmingham Six were jailed in 1975 but their convictions were quashed in 1991.

The discredited West Midlands Serious Crime Squad - later disbanded - was accused of mishandling the case. No-one from the squad was prosecuted.

West Midlands Police has ruled out a new inquiry because it has no new evidence.

A third bomb, found in Edgbaston at the rear of Barclays Bank in Hagley Road, was disabled with a controlled explosion at 5am

on the day after the pub bombings. It was later accidentally 'disposed of'.

Neither fingerprints nor further evidence of significance were discovered when the remains of the device were examined at the time but it could have now been tested with new technology.

West Midlands chief constable Chris Sims last week said it was 'very unfortunate' that the bomb had gone missing but he added that the force would 'dearly love to unlock this mystery and bring people to justice but we have found no new evidence that would assist.'

The chief constable has met with Brian and Julie Hambleton whose 18-year-old sister Maxine was among those killed by the pub bombings. Miss Hambleton said she didn't think the police had 'any desire for justice'.

Mrs Villiers made her comments as she was visiting Walsall Adult Community College in Beeches Road along with Tory candidate for Walsall North Douglas Hansen Luke.

They were looking at ways in which the college helps to get long term unemployed people back into work.

# Snooker club is to go under hammer

A SNOOKER club is going up for auction. The Golden Cue Snooker Club, in Station Road, Rowley Regis, complete with 16 full sized tables, has a guide price of £295,000 in the CP Bigwood auction

It is being held in the Holte Suite at Villa Park on May 1 from 11am.

Hagley properties with potential for housing development are in the auction. They are Strathearn on Western Road and nearby Rose Cottage and Thicknall Cottage. Strathearn, with a guide price of £900,000 to £1 million, comprises a substantial six bedroom, four reception room, detached house on a site of about one acre. It is thought up to 10 homes could be accommodated as part of a wider scheme for which outline planning permission has been granted.

The former Five Ways pub in High Street, Cradley Heath, converted into a shop and flats, is also among lots.

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## County ahead with childcare

WORCESTERSHIRE is leading the field when it comes to the quality of its nurseries, pre-schools and childminders.

Recent reports from Ofsted have suggested that elsewhere across the country not enough is being done to prepare children for school but in Worcestershire nurseries, pre-schools and childminders have been rated Good or Outstanding.

Ofsted's chief inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw has said that England's poorest children are especially badly served, as only a third reach a good level of development in pre-schools.

Many vulnerable children only take up their 15 hours of free nursery education, generally spending most of their remaining time with their family.

# Multi-million pound plans to build skills for the Black Country

**THE biggest single issue facing business in the Black Country is skills – the lack of them.**

Efforts are being poured into training apprentices to fill the growing gaps in the workforce as older, experienced, engineers retire. But, if the vision of the Black Country as a home for high value manufacturing is to become a reality, more needs to be done.

The new plan for the region is asking the Government to invest in a string of new training centres across the Black Country. In return for around £15 million from the Government's Sin-

gle Local Growth Fund, the area's Local Enterprise Partnership believes it can raise millions of pounds more from other public sector organisations, and a big chunk of investment from the private sector.

In Dudley, £8.7 million from the Government would be turned into £50m – £36m from the private sector – to be spent on a second phase of the Dudley Advance project, which is currently being built. It will be key in teaching the new Building Information Modelling (BIM) technologies in modern construction work. The centre already has strong backing from companies such

as Carillion, Stepnell, Skanska and Interserve and would be able to improve the skills of more than 3,000 people in its first five years.

In Stourbridge, Birmingham Metropolitan College will build a £15m centre to deliver apprenticeships in advanced manufacturing as well as training companies' existing workforces. It has been developed in association with Jaguar Land Rover.

In Halesowen, a £3m investment in a 14,000 sq ft Advanced Since, Engineering and Technology Skills Centre, on Coombs Wood Business Park, will create 250 apprenticeships.

## Hotel is again in awards final

A HOTEL near Kidderminster has been named as a finalist in the Small Hotel of the Year category of the prestigious Visit England Awards for Excellence.

Staff at Brockencote Hall have been told that the hotel has been named as a finalist for the second year running. They will learn whether it has taken the title at a ceremony on May 12 at Cheltenham Racecourse.

General manager Dean Gunston said the 21-bedroom hotel at Chaddesley Corbett had been highly commended previously.

He said: "We are absolutely delighted to make the final again and this year we hope to do even better."

"Since reopening in 2012, our aim has been to restore Brockencote Hall to its former glory and create a classic, high-end dining and accommodation destination."

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## Animal magic at museum



Darcey Chambers, aged 10, from Malvern, is pictured with a ferret at Hartlebury Castle

ALL creatures great and small will be heading to the Worcestershire County Museum at Hartlebury for a special event on Easter Monday.

Families will be able to get up close and personal with a variety of creatures including meerkats, skunks and armadillos during the event being staged between 11am and 5pm on April 21.

There will even be the chance for people to see baby meerkats and the more daring among visitors will be able to handle a variety of creepy crawlies including snakes, cockroaches, scorpions and spiders.

At the other end of the scale, magnificent heavy horses will be on parade and there will also be the opportunity for people to take part in a race event, thanks to the Heart of England Ferret Association.

The museum is housed in part of Hartle-

bury Castle and visitors will also get the chance to handle the bones of Frank, Worcestershire's own 250,000-year-old woolly mammoth, as well as taking part in animal-themed craft activities.

There will also be a stand manned by representatives from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and stalls erected in the Great Hall where visitors will be able to buy liqueurs, handmade jewellery and beauty products as well as have their faces painted.

Members of the Wrekin Spinners will be demonstrating traditional crafts and visitors will get the chance to churn butter in the old scullery. For younger visitors there will be story-telling games and competitions as well as an Easter trail for a chocolate prize. Animal-themed activities and the Easter trail will also take place on other holiday dates from April 22 to April 25.

## College coup as a BBC radio partner

MEDIA hopefuls of the future will be trained by City of Wolverhampton College after the institution was appointed the BBC's apprenticeships partner nationwide.

The college will be training 45 local radio journalism apprentices from across the UK, who will be combining their studies with working at BBC local radio stations.

The scheme – the BBC's biggest apprenticeship programme – will see successful candidates working as apprentice broadcast assistants in England, Wales and the Channel Islands, and apprentice content assistants in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. They will be trained in radio whilst also working towards the new NCTJ Level 3 Certificate in Foundation Journalism.

The apprentices will attend block release training at the Mailbox in Birmingham, where City of Wolverhampton College will be working with the BBC Academy. Applications for apprentices are due to open this month.

## Penguins' new home

A COLONY of Gentoo penguins have been settling in to their new surroundings after a journey of more than 11,000 miles from New Zealand.

Families visiting the National Sea Life Centre in Birmingham have been able to get their first glimpse of the 12 penguins at their new £2.5m home. The ice adventure offers an insight into the quirky habits of these inquisitive birds that are classed as 'near threatened'.

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## Bunnymen gig and new album

**INFLUENTIAL** Liverpool band Echo & The Bunnymen are coming to Wolverhampton's Wulfrun Hall on May 11, just before they release their 12th album, *Meteorites*, their first in five years.

The new album from the creators of *The Cutter*, *Lips Like Sugar* and *The Killing Moon* is out on May 26. The album has been produced by Killing Joke's Youth and single *Lovers On The Run* is released on the same day. The songs have been written by frontman Ian McCulloch and the band features original guitarist Will Sergeant.

Acclaimed for classic 1984 album *Ocean Rain*, The Bunnymen were a major influence on Brit-pop bands and Coldplay.

## OMG! Shows for the youngsters

WITH the Easter holidays in full swing there are several shows around aimed at the youngsters. Biggest will be the free pop concert *OMG* at the LG Arena on Thursday, April 24, featuring Lawson and Union J among others. Check [www.omgive.co.uk](http://www.omgive.co.uk) to see if tickets are still available.

In space no one can hear you laugh but that doesn't stop The Chuckle Brothers going on a 2014 Space Oddity for two shows at the Grand this Saturday. Jacqueline Wilson's Victorian adventure *Hetty Feather* is staged at Birmingham Town Hall from Tuesday to Sunday, April 22-27.

# Dancing in the streets and venues at month-long festival

## Happy Days are here again

HAPPY Days are here again for fans of the rock 'n' roll era US sit-com that introduced the world to the king of cool... The Fonz.

A musical based on the hit TV series, that first aired 40 years ago, is coming to Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday to Saturday, April 22-26, after a run in London. Wearing the iconic leather jacket as Arthur Fonzarelli, a role made famous by Henry Winkler, is Emmerdale's Ben Freeman. Mrs Cunningham is played by Cheryl Baker, of Eurovision favourites Bucks Fizz, with Sugababe Heidi Range as Pinky Tuscadere.

As well as the memorable theme song, *Happy Days A New Musical* features 21 songs from Bugsy Malone songwriter Paul Williams. The story about a campaign to save Arnold's Diner was penned by the TV show's creator Garry Marshall.



Heyyy... the new-look Fonz Ben Freeman with Cheryl Baker and Heidi Range

## THE Second City becomes first city of dance during the month-long International Dance Festival Birmingham 2014 from April 24.

The city hosts dance companies at various venues, and in the streets, with many events at Birmingham Hippodrome and DanceXchange's studio space The Patrick Centre.

The festival opens on Thursday with Birmingham Royal Ballet presenting a programme at the Crescent Theatre works by Kit Holder and Alexander Whitley.

One of the biggest names will be sensational French dancer Sylvie Guillem with her only UK dates for 6000 Miles Away at the Hippodrome on May 6 and 7.

Other highlights at the Hurst Street theatre include Swiss company Alias with *Sideways Rain* (April 29-30); Canadian choreographer Crystal Pite's *Kidd Pivot* company presenting Shakespeare-inspired *Tempest Replica* (May 2-3); Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui's collaboration with tango dancers in *Milonga* (May 23-24).

Dancers from the West Midlands will be involved when Matthew Bourne's *New Adventures* bring their vision of *Lord Of The Flies* from May 14 to 17. Breakdancers and hip hop music takes over when the *Breakin' Convention* is held on May 20 and 21.

Cas Public from Quebec join forces with Ex Cathedra choir for *Concert Danse* at the Symphony Hall on May 2. Rising star of South Asian dance Aakash Odedra is in *Murmur & Inked* (May 6-7) at the Patrick Centre. Acrobatic Canadians Les 7 Dights De La Main bring *Sequence 8* (May 8-10) to Birmingham Rep.



Symphony Hall's Concert Danse

One of the free highlights will be in Centenary Square at 3.30pm on May 10 when Maori performers lead a mass Haka war dance.

For details see [www.idfb.co.uk](http://www.idfb.co.uk) website.

## Reckless rocker and Rea on road

TWO of the biggest names from the '80s music scene are back on the road and coming to Birmingham for arena shows.

Canadian rocker Bryan Adams will mark the 30th anniversary of his multi-million selling *Reckless* album with a concert at the LG Arena on Wednesday, November 19. The *Reckless* album included the huge hits *Run To You* and *Summer of '69*.

Singer-songwriter Chris Rea, who has moved more into jazz in recent years, brings his *Last Open Road Tour* to the NIA on Sunday, December 14. The maker of such hits as *On The Beach*, *Fool (If You Think It's Over)* and *Let's Dance* has a new album due out in September.

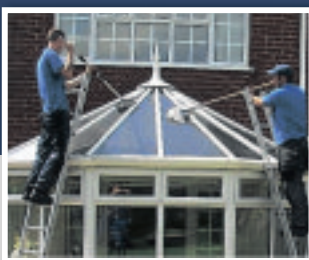
## Hanging on for music nostalgia

THERE is plenty of musical nostalgia around for the 1950s, '60s and '70s.

Tribute to Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons, *Let's Hang On*, is at Birmingham Town Hall tonight (Thursday), and *That'll Be The Day* revives hits from the rock 'n' roll era at Wolverhampton Grand tomorrow.

T Rexstasy brings Bolan boogie to the Robin 2 in Bilston on Saturday, whilst a musical dedicated to T Rex, *20th Century Boy*, opens at Birmingham New Alexandra Theatre on April 28, before coming to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre in June.

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## Beyonce

Just because BBC Two is celebrating its 50th birthday this weekend, doesn't mean it isn't still down with the kids. In fact, as this one-off special reminds us, the channel has always been at the cutting edge when it comes to music – while BBC One was bringing us *Top of the Pops*, BBC Two was home to live performances and album tracks on the *Old Grey Whistle Test*. This programme looks at 50 of the most iconic moments to emerge from the channel's musical output, from John Lennon reciting poetry with Dudley Moore on *Not Only But Also*, to Beyoncé headlining at Glastonbury in 2011. Other highlights include Joy Division's final *TV Performance*, and the Stone Roses being hit with a mid-song power shortage on *The Late Show*.

**11.50 The Football League Show.** Manish Bhasin presents highlights and all the goals from today's fixtures in the Championship, League One and League Two.

**12.00** Snooker: The World Championship. **12.50** Snooker: World Championship Extra. **2.55** This Is BBC Two

**11.15** **ITV News: Weather.**  
**11.30** **Through the Keyhole.** Catherine Tyldesley and Terry Wogan join Dave Berry on the panel. (R)  
**12.25** **Jackpot 247. 3.00** **Dinner Date:** Australia. (R) **3.45** **ITV Nightscreen**

**12.50 Film:** *Trainspotting*. (1996) **2.25**  
**Hollyoaks**. (R) **4.30** *SuperScrimpers'*  
*Challenge*. (R) **5.25** *River Cottage Bites*.  
 (R) **5.40** *Goodwood 72nd Members'*  
*Meeting*

**12.15** SuperCano. **3.15** Classic Car Rescue. (R) **4.00** Wildlife SOS. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **4.50** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show.

**E4**  
**2.00** The Big Bang Theory **3.00**  
 Rude(ish) Tuet **4.00** Made in Chelsea  
 5.00 How I Met Your Mother **6.00** The  
 Big Bang Theory **7.00** How I Met Your  
 Mother **8.00** The Tomorrow People **9.00**  
**Film:** Snakes on a Plane (2006) **11.10**  
 The Big Bang Theory **12.05** Party He  
 1. **10.2** Broke Girls **1.40** Youngers **2.35**  
 The Cleveland Show

**Film4**  
**1.00** Anastasia (1997) **1.00** The Spy  
 Next Door (2010) **2.50** Hope Floats  
 (1998) **5.00** Aliens in the Attic (2009)  
**6.40** Iron Man (2008) **9.00** Bad Teacher  
 (2011) **10.50** Goon (2011) **12.40** 30  
 Days of Night (2007) **2.50** A Letter to Elia  
 4.00 Close

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CHOICE



Billy Bob Thornton

**Fargo** (Channel 4, 9pm)  
What made the 1996 Oscar-winning movie Fargo such a success? The script and direction by the Coen Brothers, the plot, and the outstanding cast all deserve their due, but for some viewers, the snowy Minnesota setting, and the contrast between the homespun friendliness and sing-song accents of the locals and the unfolding horror, was also a big part of the appeal. And it's that ambience which carries over into this new TV series, which keeps the location and mix of humour and murder, but introduces a new story and a fresh set of characters – played by an equally impressive cast. Billy Bob Thornton stars as Lorne Malvo, a malicious drifter, who enters the life of smalltown insurance man Lester Nygaard (Martin Freeman).

BBC1

**6.00** Breakfast. **8.35** Match of the Day. (R) **10.00** Easter Worship from Leicester. **11.00** Uribi et Orbi. **11.35** Flog It! (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. With Mark Chapman and the Match of the Day team. **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.00** More Creatures Great and Small. (R) **2.30** Formula 1 – Chinese Grand Prix Highlights. **4.30** Escape to the Country. **5.00** Lifestyle. **5.10** Songs of Praise. **5.45** Pointless Celebrities. (R)  
**6.35** **BBC News:** Regional News; Weather.  
**7.00** **Countryfile.** The team heads to the Isles of Scilly, where Ellie Harrison finds out about the problem of rats and the devastating effect they have on the local seabird population. She also visits the privately owned island of Tresco, to hear how a programme to eradicate the rodents affects the recently imported red squirrels. Matt Baker goes flying with ducklings – boarding a plane with 50 birds destined for a duck farm on Scilly – and back on the mainland, Tom Heap looks at the dangers involved in farming, as well as ways to make it safer, and Adam Henson visits a goat farm. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.  
**8.00** **Antiques Roadshow.** Fiona Bruce and the team make a return visit to Polesden Lacey near Dorking in Surrey, in search of more family treasures. Curios on show include a painting of JMW Turner's house on the banks of the Thames, a set of early board game designs and an instrument panel from a Lancaster bomber.  
**9.00** **The Crimson Field.** Thomas develops a system to help treat wounds, although Major Yelland is dismissive of the method and begins to bully the younger surgeon. Joan reveals a secret to a patient.  
**10.00** **BBC News:** Regional News; Weather.  
**10.25** **Match of the Day 2.** Norwich City v Liverpool, Hull City v Arsenal and Everton v Manchester United. Mark Chapman presents highlights of the Premier League matches.  
**11.35** **Live at the Apollo.** Kevin Bridges hosts the stand-up comedy from the Hammersmith Apollo in London, introducing routines by Phill Jupitus and Sara Pascoe. (R)  
**12.20** **Weatherline.** **12.25** BBC News.

BBC2

**6.00** This Is BBC Two. **6.30** Countryfile. (R) **7.30** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.00** The Beechgrove Garden. **8.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **10.00** Live Snooker: The World Championship. **12.15** Film: Custer of the West. (1967) Historical biopic, starring Robert Shaw. **2.30** Live Snooker: The World Championship. The second session on the second day at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield.  
**6.00** **Davis v Taylor: The '85 Black Ball Final.** Colin Murray presents a look back at the final of the 1985 World Snooker Championship between Dennis Taylor and Steve Davis. The match finished after midnight, but kept an estimated 18.5 million viewers engrossed until the title was decided on the final ball of the 35th frame. With contributions from Barry McGuigan, Ted Lowe, Stephen Hendry and Barry Hearn. (R)  
**7.00** **Morecambe & Wise in Pieces: Leading Men.** Penelope Keith presents a compilation of highlights from the comedy duo's stage featuring appearances by male stars of stage and screen.  
**8.00** **50 Golden Years of Sport on BBC Two.** Sue Barker presents a look back at the history of sport on the channel through some of its most memorable events. With contributions by Murray Walker, Des Lynam and Ian Botham.  
**9.00** **All About Two.** Dara O Briain hosts a quiz celebrating 50 years of BBC Two in which teams of celebrities answer questions about the channel's programmes and stars. The panellists are Mock the Week's Hugh Dennis, Deborah Meaden of Dragons' Den, Dave Myers of the Hairy Bikers, Professor Brian Cox, Goodness Gracious Me star Meera Syal and choirmaster Gareth Malone, with Pointless co-host Richard Osman on hand to supply extra facts and figures.  
**10.40** **The Making of Ol.** An insight into the production of the popular comedy quiz show in which host Stephen Fry awards points to contestants who provide interesting answers to his questions. (R)  
**11.40** **Snooker: The World Championship.** Highlights of the evening session at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, which featured the conclusion of the first-round matches.  
**12.30** **Snooker: World Championship Extra.** **2.30** Sign Zone: Countryfile. **3.25** Holby City. (R) **4.25** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

**6.00** CITV: Dino Dan. **6.10** Dino Dan. (R) **6.25** Matt Hatter Chronicles. (R) **6.50** Animals. (R) **7.10** Om Nom Stories. (R) **7.05** Animals. (R) **7.10** Om Nom Stories. (R) **7.20** Sooty. (R) **7.30** Scrambled! **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Dickinson's Real Deal. (R) **10.30** Film: Columbo Goes to College. (1991) **12.30** ITV News; Weather. (R) **1.10** The Unforgettable Yootha Joyce. (R) **1.40** Big Star's Little Star. (R) **2.40** Britain's Got Talent. (R) **3.55** Film: A View to a Kill. (1985) James Bond adventure.  
**6.20** **Regional Programme:** Weather.  
**6.30** **ITV News:** Weather.  
**6.45** **Catchphrase.** Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show in which three contestants guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues, before one of them plays to win £50,000.  
**7.30** **Off Their Rockers.** Velma gets racy in a photo booth, Seb needs a fright to cure his hiccups and Rosemary eats some funny-tasting biscuits. Hidden-camera comedy with fearless senior citizens.  
**8.00** **Endeavour.** As plans to build a new police station lead Morse to question his place in the force, he investigates the case of Tommy Cork, a boy from a broken home who has disappeared. Meanwhile, the body of disreputable journalist Eric Patterson has been found on railway tracks in mysterious circumstances. He was last seen embroiled in an argument with a council official about a company preparing to redevelop the site of Blenheim Vale, a disused correctional facility for boys. When a petty criminal with a connection to Blenheim absconds from an open prison, it sets off a chain reaction of events that threaten to expose horrors of the past. Did missing Tommy witness something that cost him his life? Last in the series.  
**10.00** **Perspectives: The Magic of Houdini with Alan Davies.** New series. The Jonathan Creek star explores the extraordinary life of escapologist Harry Houdini and takes part in a series of death-defying acts to understand what made him tick.  
**11.00** **ITV News:** Weather.  
**11.15** **Premiership Rugby Union.** **12.15** The Store. **2.15** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **3.45** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

**6.05** Film: Hoot. (2006) **7.40** Film: Lassie. (2005) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Secret Eaters. (R) **1.35** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.05** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.35** How I Met Your Mother. **3.00** How I Met Your Mother. **3.30** The Simpsons. (R) **4.00** The Simpsons. (R) **4.30** Deal or No Deal. **5.35** Channel 4 News.  
**6.05** **Lent Diaries.** The lives of people who worship in Britain's West African churches, the fastest-growing sector of Christianity in Britain today. Last in the series.  
**6.10** **Prize: Hop.** (2011) Premiere. The Easter Bunny's son is about to take over the chocolate-delivering business, but rejects his responsibilities and heads for Hollywood to seek fame and fortune as a drummer. He makes life difficult for the directionless slacker who takes him in, but they must work together to avert a crisis on Easter Island. Part-animated comedy, with James Marsden.  
**8.00** **For the Love of Cars.** New series. Life on Mars star Philip Glenister and renowned car designer Ant Anstead scour barns and lock-ups across the nation on a mission to restore six classic motors to their former glory. They begin by tracking down a rare Ford Escort Mexico, and while Ant takes on the mammoth task of rebuilding the rusty vehicle, Philip explores the story behind one of the most beloved British cars ever built, meeting passionate boy racers who are preserving the Escort spirit.  
**9.00** **Fargo.** New series. Crime comedy-drama based on the Coen brothers' Oscar-winning 1996 film. Martin Freeman stars as small-town Minnesota insurance salesman Lester Nygaard, who is set on a path of destruction after an encounter with manipulative drifter Lorne Malvo. Colin Hanks plays single father Gus Grimly, who must choose between his own safety and his duty as a police officer when he comes face to face with a killer.  
**10.30** **Film: Heat.** (1995) A detective becomes obsessed with capturing a highly intelligent career criminal who is planning one last robbery before his retirement. Thriller, with Al Pacino and Robert De Niro.  
**1.35** The Good Wife. (R) **2.20** The Hotel. (R) **3.15** Secret Removers. (R) **4.10** SuperScrimers' Challenge. (R) **5.05** Deal or No Deal. (R)

CHANNEL 5

**6.00** Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Fifi and the Flowerpots. (R) **6.25** Bubble Guppies. (R) **6.35** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.50** Chloe's Closet. **7.00** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.20** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.30** Little Princess. (R) **7.50** Film: Thomas & Friends: King of the Railway – The Movie. (2013) Animated adventure, with the voice of Ben Small. **8.55** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **10** Jilly Jamm. (R) **9.30** Lazy Town. (R) **9.55** Power Rangers Super Samurai. (R) **10.30** Power Rangers Megaforce. (R) **11.05** Access. (R) **11.15** The Dog Rescuers. (R) **11.45** Film: Eragon. (2006) Fantasy adventure, starring Ed Speleers. **1.40** Film: Spider-Man 3. (2007) Superhero sequel, starring Tobey Maguire. **4.20** The Sound of Music Live!  
**7.00** **5 News Weekend.**  
**7.05** **Film: The Forbidden Kingdom.** (2008) Premiere. An American teenager obsessed with kung fu movies is sent back in time to ancient China, where he joins the battle to free the imprisoned Monkey King. The only problem is he has no martial arts skills of his own, and will need the assistance of two legendary warriors to become the hero he needs to be. Martial arts adventure, starring Jet Li and Jackie Chan. Edited for violence and language.  
**9.00** **Film: Act of Valor.** (2012) Premiere. A team of elite Navy personnel is sent on a mission to rescue a kidnapped CIA agent. Their mission leads them to uncover a conspiracy between a Russian drug smuggler and a fanatical terrorist, and a plan to launch a devastating attack on the United States. Military adventure, starring Alex Veadov and Roselyn Sanchez. Edited for language.  
**10.50** **Film: Punisher: War Zone.** (2008) Premiere. The ruthless vigilante faces a battle to the death with a disfigured mobster. Action thriller based on the Marvel comic-book, starring Ray Stevenson and Dominic West.  
**12.55** SuperCasino. Live interactive gaming. **3.05** Britain's Crime Capitals. A look at towns and cities in the UK most affected by crime, beginning with Liverpool. (R) **4.00** Wildlife SOS. (R) **4.20** Make It Big. The big day arrives. (R) **4.45** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.35** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

**BBC Three**  
**7.00** Don't Tell the Bride **8.00** Film: Toy Story 3 (2010) **9.35** Russell Howard's Good News **10.05** Family Guy **10.50** Sweat the Small Stuff **11.20** American Dad! **12.05** Ja'mie: Private School Girl **1.00** Russell Howard's Good News **1.30** Orphan Black **8.00** In the Flesh  
**BBC Four**  
**7.00** Film: The Man in the White Suit (1951) **8.25** Film: The Happiest Days of Your Life (1950) **9.45** The Art of Tommy Cooper **10.15** The Secret Life of Bob Monkhouse **11.45** Arena: Ken Dodd – Happiness **12.45** The Wonder of Bees with Martha Kearney **1.15** Imagine – Jimi Hendrix: Hear My Train a Comin' **2.45** Jimi Hendrix: The Road to Woodstock  
**ITV2**  
**12.00** You've Been Framed! Family Special **12.40** Film: Valiant (2005) **2.15** Film: Despicable Me (2010) **4.15** Britain's Got Talent **5.30** Britain's Got More Talent **6.30** Film: The Lost World: Jurassic Park (1997) **9.00** Film: Quantum of Solace (2008) **11.10** Film: Hostage (2005) **1.35** Mon **2.00** The Vampire Diaries **2.40** Ke\$ha: The Hot Desk **2.50** Teleshopping  
**ITV3**  
**12.15** Film: Carry On Follow That Camel (1967) **2.10** Film: Carry On Girls (1973) **4.00** Film: The Great St Trinian's Train Robbery (1966) **5.55** Inspector Morse **8.00** The Zoo **9.00** Birds of a Feather **9.30** Vicious **10.00** Film: The Graduate (1967) **12.10** Cracker **1.20** Film: Carry On Girls (1973) **2.55** Movies Now **3.05** ITV3 Nightscreen **3.40** Emmerdale  
**ITV4**  
**6.30** Police, Camera, Action! **7.00** Storage Wars **8.00** Premiership Rugby Union **9.00** Indian Premier League Cricket **10.00** Film: Unleashed (2005) **12.00** Film: Village of the Damned (1995) **2.00** Minder **3.00** Teleshopping **3.30** The Store **5.00** Teleshopping  
**E4**  
**12.35** Made in Chelsea **1.35** Revenge **2.30** Rudolph! Tube **3.30** The Big Bang Theory **4.30** How I Met Your Mother **5.00** The Tomorrow People **6.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** Film: Independence Day (1996) **11.00** Rude Tube: Total Stunts **12.00** How I Met Your Mother **1.00** Rules of Engagement **2.00** Rude Tube: Total Stunts **2.55** Bob's Burgers  
**Film4**  
**11.00** The 7th Voyage of Sinbad (1958) **1.00** Flash Gordon (1938) **3.10** The Towering Inferno (1974) **6.20** The Karate Kid (2010) **9.00** Layer Cake (2004) **11.05** Role Models (2008) **1.00** Underworld: Evolution (2006) **3.25** Close



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Film Choices

**MONDAY**  
**Rocky Balboa, Channel 5, 11pm**  
The ageing fighter contemplates a return to the ring when a computer simulation reveals he would have defeated the current world heavyweight champion Mason "The Line" Dixon, who responds by challenging Rocky to face him for real. Boxing drama sequel, directed by and starring Sylvester Stallone. With Antonio Tarver, Geraldine Hughes, Burt Young, Milo Ventimiglia and Tony Burton. (2006)

**TUESDAY**  
**A Woman's Rage, Channel 5, 3.10pm**  
An obsessively jealous woman with a history of failed relationships is devastated when her boyfriend leaves her. She blames his younger sister for causing the break-up, and plans to get revenge by seducing her teenage son. Crime drama, starring Cynthia Preston, Brandy Ledford, Cameron Bancroft and Alex House. (2008)

**WEDNESDAY**  
**The Private Lives of Pippa Lee, BBC1, 11.45pm**  
A middle-aged woman married to a man 30 years older than her is shocked when he announces his intention to leave their New York home in favour of a retirement community. Driven to desperation by her dull new surroundings and her husband's affair with an even younger woman, she looks back on her wild youth. Drama, with Robin Wright, Alan Arkin and Winona Ryder. (2009)



Rocky Balboa, Monday, Channel 5, 11pm

**THURSDAY**  
**Two for the Money, BBC1, 11.35pm**  
An American football player whose career is cut short by injury becomes the protégé of a power player in the world of sports gambling because of his knack for predicting winners. For a time the former sportsman enjoys the life of a high-roller, but when his skill begins to falter, his mentor turns on him and the pair engage in a fraught game of con and counter-con. Drama, with Al Pacino, Matthew McConaughey, Rene Russo and Armand Assante. (2005)

**FRIDAY**  
**The Bourne Ultimatum, ITV, 10.35pm**  
Amnesiac rogue assassin Jason Bourne's long-buried memories are reawakened by a British journalist researching the secret organisation that was responsible for transforming him into a killing machine. Meanwhile, a ruthless CIA director becomes convinced Bourne is still a security risk, and plans to dispose of him once and for all. Third instalment of the spy thriller series, directed by Paul Greengrass and starring Matt Damon, Joan Allen, Julia Stiles, David Strathairn, Paddy Considine, Scott Glenn and Albert Finney. (2007)



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Pick of the Week

Tommy finds himself caught in the middle

Could you see Shameless's Frank Gallagher as Tommy Cooper? Perhaps not, but David Threlfall has long had that charameleon-like ability to slip into any role, no matter how unlikely.

For a decade it seemed Threlfall was forever destined to play dolt cheat Gallagher in Channel 4's hit drama. Thankfully over the last couple of years he has gone back to inhabiting a variety of real and fictional characters. Last year he was on top form as retired detective Len Harper in BBC drama What Remains. Now he's doing an uncanny take on Tommy Cooper in this drama paying tribute to the iconic magician and comedian who passed away 30 years ago this month.

It focuses largely on Cooper's relationships with two women – his wife Gwen (Amanda Redman) and Mary Kay (Helen McCrory), the assistant with whom he had a 17-year affair which only ended when he collapsed and died live on TV in 1984.

In the flesh, Threlfall is light years away from many of his more famous

creations. There's none of the hammy am dram thespian he played in Hot Fuzz (a film he still hasn't seen), and his ability to morph into Cooper for this drama is remarkable.

"It's his story from '87 to the night he died inclusive, and I guess the back story of what he was doing publicly and some of his private life," explains David. "What's nice about it is it's a period piece, and it nods to the people of a certain age who knew Tommy Cooper and either really liked him or worshipped him because he was a completely special one-off."

At 15 stone, and standing six foot four, Cooper was a unique sight on any stage. Despite being a skilled magician, it was his failed tricks that brought the house down. But off stage, his love of booze and subsequent poor health took its toll.

David was well aware of how important it was to give a faithful performance: "People use the word 'genius' too much, but I think you can apply it to (Spike) Milligan, you can apply it to Tommy Cooper... so no pressure at all trying to portray that," he laughs. "But I had a go. So there's



Tommy Cooper: Not Like That, Like This, Monday, ITV, 9pm

Best of the Rest

**MONDAY**  
**24 Hours on Earth BBC1, 7pm**  
Finally, the nights are getting that little bit longer, the weather is – sort of – brightening up a bit – it's the strongest hint yet that summer is well on its way. And while we maybe shouldn't get too far ahead of ourselves and start mentally packing our suitcases for our summer holiday, for the time being we're being treated to another brilliant documentary from the Beeb, about how nature and animals deal with this time of the year. It tells how the changing position of the sun in the sky affects the behaviour of animals and plants across our planet. The animals are alert; from the moment the sun rises, they're waiting, ready to take advantage of all the opportunities that come with it.

**Jamaica Inn BBC1, 9pm**  
It's Easter, so it should come as no surprise to find that the BBC is broadcasting a lavish costume drama. This time it's an adaptation of Daphne Du Maurier's novel Jamaica Inn, which stars former Downton Abbey resident Jessica Brown Findlay as Mary Yellan, who turns down a marriage proposal in favour of moving to Cornwall to live with her aunt Patience following her mother's death. Patience runs Jamaica Inn with her bullying husband Joss, a hard-drinking smuggler, just one of many locals who seems to live outside the law. Mary falls for his brother, Jem, but after witnessing a murder, has a tough decision to make about whether to report what she has seen.

**TUESDAY**  
**The Big Allotment Challenge BBC2, 8pm**  
Last week, Fern Britton kicked off The Big Allotment Challenge by introducing the nine pairs of gardeners whose skills were about to be put to the test. One duo fell by the wayside after failing to impress during flower-arranging and jam-making tasks, so when we catch up with the gang again, only eight pairs remain. This week, they have to give the perfect runner beans and roses, then use their produce to create summer wreaths and relishes. But who will come out smelling of, erm, roses, and who will end up in a sticky spot? We'll find out after horticultural expert Jim Butters, floral designer Jonathan Moseley and food writer Thane Prince have offered their opinions on the contestants' efforts.

**New Worlds Channel 4, 9pm**  
If you're basing your knowledge of Charles II on Horrible Histories (and there are definitely worse places to get your information from), you may be under the impression that he was the king who brought back partying. But as this historical drama has shown, not all of his subjects felt like celebrating under his reign. In the final episode, there's definitely a revolutionary spirit in the air in America as Ned (Joe Dempsie) returns to Hope (Alice Englert),



Jamaica Inn, Monday, BBC1, 9pm

and tells her that he does want them to be together – but first they have to find a hiding place for Beth (Freya Mavor).

**WEDNESDAY**  
**Derek Channel 4, 10pm**  
Viewers and critics were unsure of Derek when it was commissioned by Channel 4. Could Ricky Gervais, a comedian and writer who had made his name with The Office and Extras, pull off a gentle sitcom about a man who may have learning difficulties? But what Gervais has created is a moving story about a group of people living on the margins of society, with Derek the glue holding them together. The second run picks up a year after we last saw Derek and his friends. He's now fully reunited with his dad, who is moving into Broad Hill, the retirement home where Derek is a care worker. Tom and Hannah's relationship seems to have become serious, but a new volunteer is set to rock the boat...

**THURSDAY**  
**Wanted: A Family of My Own ITV, 9pm**  
Presenter Nicky Campbell is the perfect choice for helming this new four-part series about the life-changing process of adoption – because he was adopted himself as a baby. For the purpose of this at times emotional programme, cameras have followed parents desperate to adopt, and the children who need families – so that we can gain a rare insight into adoption in Britain today, and the impact it has on the lives of those involved. In this first instalment, we hear Nicky's story, before he meets Dan and Ania, who are desperate to adopt, and they receive information about two children needing a family.

**FRIDAY**  
**Weekend Escapes with Warwick Davis ITV, 8pm**  
The actor takes his family to Norfolk, where they begin with a boat trip along the Broads, which are made up of more than 125 miles of waterways. Next, they cross the county to visit the seaside resort of Hunstanton, which gives Warwick the chance to participate in an RNLI training exercise. He then persuades his wife and children to have a go at milking sheep at nearby Bircham Windmill, before ending the weekend at a local amusement arcade.

**The Trip to Italy BBC2, 10pm**  
Steve's assistant Kate joins him and Rob in Rome, where they also meet up with photographer Yolanda before visiting the Keats-Shelley Memorial House museum. They go on to their next restaurant, where Emma has a bit of news for them, and Rob and Steve compete with each other doing Marlon Brando impressions.

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A unique modern detached family home well situated for access for Stourbridge, Wolverhampton, Birmingham and surround set in a rural location with well-proportioned accommodation.

- 4 Bedrooms
- En-Suite Shower Room
- Fitted Kitchen/Family Room (23'11 x 14'10 max)
- Indoor Heated Swimming Pool
- Gym Area
- Detached Double Garage
- Gardens and Paddock
- Stables & Approximately 1.5 Acres
- EPC = F

**OFFERS INVITED £499,950**



## Sutton Park Road, Kidderminster

A substantial detached, traditional family home with generous and flexible accommodation over three floors being well situated in one of the most popular residential locations on the Western outskirts of Kidderminster and having recently been improved and updated.

- Detached Family Home
- 5 Double Bedrooms
- Contemporary bathroom
- 4 Reception Rooms
- Ground floor Shower Room
- Modern Fitted Kitchen Diner
- Generous Private Plot
- Detached Double Garage
- Attached double garage & parking.
- EPC = E

**OFFERS INVITED £455,000**



## Blakebrook, Kidderminster

A beautiful character family home in wonderful condition, having been extended and particularly well situated within one of Kidderminster's most popular and sought after residential locations

- 4 Bedrooms
- 2 Bathrooms
- Spacious Living and Dining Rooms
- Fitted Kitchen & Cloakroom
- Extended family room
- Breakfast/Dining Area
- Private Gardens
- Generous Parking & Garage
- EPC = E

**OFFERS INVITED £360,000**



## Franchise Road, Wolverley

A much improved and extended detached family home situated in the much sought after village of Wolverley.

- Detached & Extended House
- 3 Double Bedrooms
- 2 Bathrooms & Shower Room
- Living Room & Dining Room
- Reception Hall/Study
- Large Breakfast Kitchen
- Off Road Parking for Several vehicles
- Private Gardens
- EPC = D

**OFFERS INVITED £309,950**



## Fairfield Lane, Wolverley

A deceptively spacious detached and extended bungalow sitting within a generous plot with beautiful gardens and rural views, within this popular semi rural location.

- Detached Bungalow
- 3 Bedrooms
- 2 Reception Rooms
- Fitted Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Beautiful and Generous Gardens
- Fabulous Countryside Views
- Garage & Car Port
- EPC = D

**OFFERS INVITED £309,950**



## Franchise Road, Kidderminster

A wonderful extended and much improved traditional detached family home well situated in this popular residential location with a fantastic private rear garden. Internal viewing a must.

- Detached Extended 4 Bedroomed Home
- Family Bathroom
- Separate Shower Room
- Living Room
- Play/Games Room
- Modern Fitted Kitchen Diner
- Utility Room & Cloakroom
- Generous Gardens & Detached Garage
- EPC = D

**OFFERS INVITED £279,950**



## Wolverhampton Road, Kidderminster

A beautifully presented immaculate detached family home conveniently located in this elevated position.

- 4 Bedrooms
- 2 Bathrooms
- 2 Reception Rooms
- Fitted Kitchen
- Ground Floor Cloakroom
- Private Gardens
- Off Road Parking
- Detached Garage
- EPC = D

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## Drivetime

# When going gets tough

By Sharon Walters

**Hands up – we all make errors when driving. No-one, and I mean no-one, is perfect.**

Sometimes we are taken unawares and have to act pretty quick to get out of trouble. And, thank heavens, the majority of those errors are minor causing no more than a sharp foot on the brake or some evasive action.

Quite often those errors can actually demonstrate how good the cars are which we are driving.

Which is what happened to me when driving the Vauxhall Insignia Country Tourer for the first time. A left turn over an adverse camber which proved tighter than I anticipated, meant for a moment I was half expecting to lose control. But no, road-holding was excellent, main-

ly due to the four-wheel drive system. This system, which underpins the Country Tourer version of the Insignia range, is an electronically-controlled set-up which automatically directs torque to the rear axle when it detects slippage, ensuring decent traction when the going gets a bit slippery.

In normal road conditions, the car defaults back to front-wheel drive mode, which helps cut fuel consumption and emissions. Which means you don't have to do anything except steer! The car easily coped with my actions and I felt totally in control – as I did when driving it through mud-strewn and flooded roads in January.

The car was the last addition to the revised Insignia range which hit our roads late last year. Like the rest of the revised Insignia range, the Country Tourer has the latest round of updates which have made this mid-sized Vauxhall one of the best-riding cars in its class.

### Better

Damper and anti-roll bar settings have been revised for better ride and control, while the electronic power steering system has been reprogrammed for better feel. Noise, vibration and harshness levels have also been reduced.

The 20mm of additional ride height also helps when tackling off-road tracks, although it's worth remembering the approach and departure angles are still a little shallow, so it's best not to get stuck into any terrain which looks a bit too rough.

The Country Tourer gets two of the best engines in the Insignia line-up. Both are punchy 2.0-litre CDTi units, a 163PS variant with start/stop and a muscley 195PS BiTurbo unit. The 163PS engine is available with either a six-speed manual or six-speed automatic transmission, and the BiTurbo comes with the automatic gearbox only.



Despite its 0-62mph time of 9.9 seconds and 130mph top speed, the Country Tourer BiTurbo can still achieve 42.8mpg on the combined cycle, with CO2 emissions of just 174g/km.

It certainly looks a capable beast too, with its signature Griffin grille, which is now wider and deeper, making the front styling distinctively Vauxhall. There's coloured protective cladding on the side sills and lower body sections, which gives the wheel-arches a more pronounced, flared look.

A final visual flourish is provided by distinctive front and rear light units. The headlamps, with embedded chrome accents, incorporate wing-style LED daytime running lights. This theme is repeated at the rear, with LED brake and taillights. It looks good from front, side and rear – and probably from above too.

Build quality is good and inside there's a high

level of finish, with a dashboard computer display usefully mimicking the central console.

However the selection process for the many displays available is a little confusing and I was stuck in the wrong display for a time. I had to park up and practice going between each before cracking the 'code'.

I also have to mention the excellent sound system, a must for a music fan like me.

Another plus for me was the nifty electric boot lift which made putting shopping bags in so easy. There was no dumping the bags on to soggy ground and fiddling with a catch.

Joining other Vauxhall 4x4s including the Mokka, Antara and a new Movano all-wheel drive van, the Country Tourer is the Luton-based manufacturer's latest entry into the growing D-segment crossover sector.

With ever-worsening British winters, there

has been increased demand from customers wanting the robustness of an SUV combined with the convenience of a tourer body shape.

"The Insignia Country Tourer is perfect for a winter holiday, on snowy roads, or simply when the going gets tough," said Stuart Harris, Vauxhall's head of carline brand. "Even on urban roads its robust looks give it strong stand-out appeal." It is also, as I found, a very comfortable car for normal day-to-day use, with the added security of all-wheel drive for when the going gets a little tough.

You can choose between two trim levels, Country Tourer, priced from £25,349 to £29,709 on the road, and Country Tourer Nav, priced from £26,499 to £30,859 on the road.

Crucially, entry-level Insignia Country Tourer Nav pricing undercuts that of key D-segment crossover rivals.

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## Spring offers on Suzukis

Suzuki has chosen to put a spring in car buyers' steps with Alto, Splash, Swift and SX4 available under the brand's highly successful VAT-free campaign; which will run until the end of June.

The popular Alto SZ model will continue to be available from £5,999 which represents a £1,200 customer saving on list price. Splash 1.0-litre SZ2 is available from £7,999, Swift 1.2 SZ2 three door at £8,999 and the SX4 1.6 SZ3 available for £10,495.

Suzuki is also continuing its flexible PCP (Personal Contract Purchase) offers until the end of June. Alto SZ is available for a deposit of £869 fol-

lowed by one payment of £125 then 41 monthly payments of £99 with the option to pay a final balloon payment of £2,235 at the end of the agreement to keep the car.

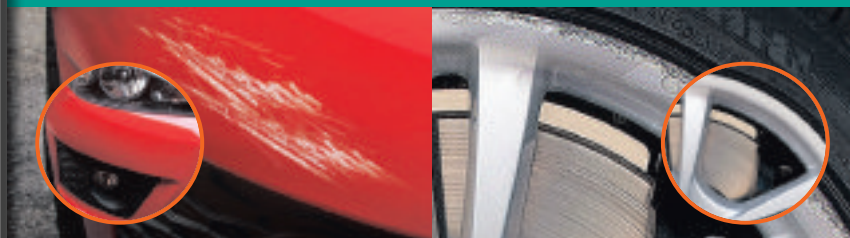
Moving up the small car range to the Splash SZ2 1.0-litre, the latest PCP offer has a low deposit of £929 followed by 48 monthly payments of £125 and an optional final payment of £2,883.

The good news also continues for Swift buyers; as an example, the SZ2 three door at £8,999 remains available for a deposit of only £156 followed by 42 monthly payments of £156 and an optional final payment of £3,683. The PCP offers include the latest model Swift 1.3 DDiS which has CO2 emissions of just 101g/km and offers 72.4mpg on the combined cycle.

The SX4 S-Cross range is available from £14,999 and there are a range of finance options to help buyers find a payment option that suits them; including a new enhancement on Drive-plan PCP making all DDiS models available for the same deposit and monthly payment as an equivalent petrol version.

Taking the 1.6 petrol SZ3 model as an example with its high standard specification, Suzuki is offering a low rate PCP of 4.9 per cent APR with £2,999 deposit, 42 monthly payments of £185 and optional balloon payment of £5,757. Move up the range to the SZ4 with Dual Zone automatic air conditioning, Bluetooth connectivity, front fog lamps and rear privacy glass as standard and payments are £10 per

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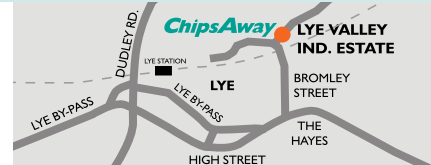
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# Drivetime

# C-Class is now making its mark

By Andy Enright

The Mercedes C-Class has grown up a little, and in doing so has become a force to be reckoned with.

The latest Mercedes-Benz C-Class range offers more space, an interior that's leagues ahead of its predecessor, the option of air suspension and some very slick infotainment and technological features.

The C-Class ought to have been all that the company knows about luxury saloons distilled into a smaller form, but for many years it was instead a car that was short on quality and long on price tag.

The 2007 model repaired much of its reputation and the subsequent 2011 facelift brought even more features and better efficiency, but in this country, the C-Class always lagged a distant third in the compact executive sales charts behind the BMW 3 Series and the Audi A4.

Much has changed in the interim though. The introduction of a smaller four-door saloon, the CLA, has allowed the C-Class to become a bit bigger and a good deal more luxurious. The latest car is a fresh design from the ground up and it shows.

Although there will doubtless be a turbo-charged AMG tarmac-tearer in the works,

.....

**‘This is where a good deal of the development budget has been spent’**

.....

the C-Class has for some time been, and will continue to be, focused on comfort and refinement.

It's clear this is where a good deal of the development budget has been spent in differentiating this generation car from the BMW 3 Series, the Audi A4 and the much-improved Lexus IS.

To that end, it's the first car in its class to offer air suspension. This comes with an Agility Select switch which allows the driver to select between Comfort, ECO, Sport, Sport+ and Individual settings.

The diesel engines include a 2.1-litre C220 BlueTEC unit good for 170PS, plus you can talk to your dealer about feebler C200 BlueTEC and pokier C250 BlueTEC offerings. Petrol-wise, there's a 184PS C200 unit. Granted, it's not a very wide range of engines to duke it out with BMW

and Audi but expect more exciting options to arrive in due course.

The C300 BlueTEC Hybrid combines a four-cylinder 204PS diesel engine with a compact 27PS electric motor and looks interesting, as does the prospect of a plug-in hybrid model. In the here and now, there's a choice of two six-speed manual transmissions or an improved version of the 7G-Tronic automatic gearbox. The electromechanical Direct Steer system is also fitted as standard.

Looking at the exterior of this C-Class, you'd be forgiven for thinking that this was the most conservative of styling directions. Any notionally car-literate person would be able to tell you it was a Mercedes C-Class, even if they'd never clapped eyes on the thing before. It's tidily executed, with hints of the latest S-Class in its detailing.

Drop inside and you'll see where this Mercedes differentiates itself. It's radically different to its predecessor with a broad centre console swooping between the front occupants.

Prices for the C200 petrol start at around £27,000, while for a C200 BlueTEC diesel, you'll pay from around £29,500. There are three trim levels, SE, Sport and AMG Line.

Expect to find pricing very slightly above obvious rivals but the downsized engines balance that out to some extent. One thing's for sure. Mercedes hasn't done things by halves here. This C-Class is one to watch.






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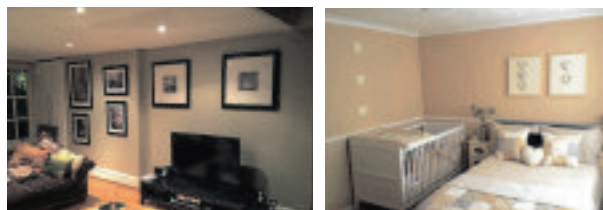
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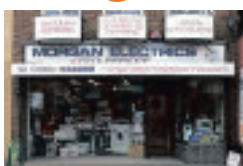
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STOURBRIDGE Chronicle

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# Local Specialists

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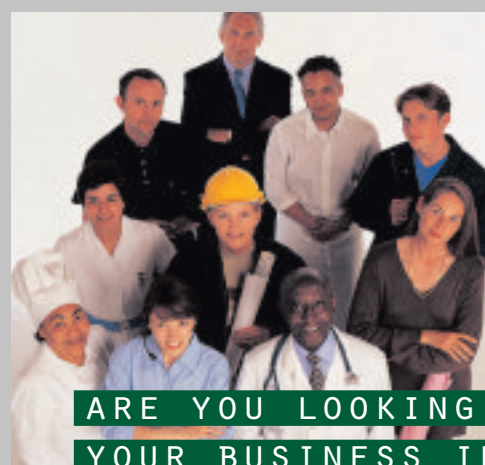
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## 6 Property

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**PEUGEOT 206** 2002, 54,825 miles, green, long MoT, central locking, pas, tax, CD, £950 ono. 07799 557633.

**PROTON** 1.6XLI, 1996, 22,000 miles, excellent condition, £495. 01902 752590. 07762 381833.

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## It's just champion for chess players

STOURBRIDGE Chess Club's Dudley division one team hosted Rushall in what looked like an even matched. Julie Wilson was a convincing winner and Dave Scriven's opponent resigned. Nick Arkell and John Foxall both accepted draws to give confirm victory.

The club went into the week as title contenders in Wolverhampton division 1 with everything resting on two adjourned games from the match against Bushbury with the match score 2-2. Nic Fallowfield took his game and Eric Horwill who had an inferior position, battled hard to get a draw.

Only Lichfield could stop them by winning all three of their adjourned games. But they could not do it and Stourbridge are the champions with six wins, two draws and one loss.

Thursday night was Birmingham league finals night. Stourbridge had teams in both finals but third division Redditch proved too strong in the Terrill trophy final.

The third division team faced 2nd division Sutton Coldfield in the final of the Homer Cup for teams knocked out in the first round of the Terrill. The game was adjourned with a tough fight ahead.

## Pedmore power on for title

**Pedmore (131-2) beat Belbroughton (94-4)**

THE final week of the league at Edgecliff School, Kinver, saw champions Pedmore retain their unbeaten record.

Pedmore's opening batsmen made scoring runs look easy. Dave Skelding (23) and Dan Jones started at a rapid rate which was maintained by Sam Peruzza (26 no) Matt Porter (26 no) and James Burgoyne. Jones ran out Geoff Day and despite the efforts of Will Pardoe (28 no) Belbroughton could not stop Pedmore.

Matches between Oldswinford and Belbroughton and Enville 'A' and Swindon were cancelled. Lye conceded matches to Belbroughton and Swindon.

# Hales can't recover from warm-up injury

**Old Halesonians 14 Lymm 32**  
A BUMPER crowd came to Wassell Grove on Saturday for the last game of the season.

But things started badly for Hales, who lost fly half Steve Powell in the warm up to a thigh strain. They were already without top scoring centre Andy Robinson with a thigh tear and skipper Richie Taylor with a fractured cheekbone.

Lymm played some dominant rugby from the off and punished every Hales mistake which included three pass interceptions which resulted in tries. Hales were forced to defend their line, and limiting attack-

### Rugby

ing options. Half time saw Hales trailing 7-9 thanks to a home try just before the interval from Simon Sabel, converted by Chris Hooper. Renewed effort saw Hales claw their way back into the game with a pushover try scored by Mark Evans, again converted by Hooper at 14 - 19,

This was followed by what seemed to be a try from hooker Pete Fitzgerald, which the referee deemed to be short of the line. Lymm once again took advantage, kicked

the ball clear for their backs to chase down and carry the length of the pitch for what was a decisive try 14 - 24

This was followed by another excellent try from Lymm's backs who finished the game on a high with an additional penalty taking the final score to Hales to 14 - 32.

Hales squad and coaches were disappointed with the result but can take great comfort from what has been an excellent first season in national rugby finishing 4th.

Director of Rugby Gary Cox, coaches Mark Evans and Dan Lynne have done a sterling job with the players in what has

been a roller coaster season. Only on one occasion have they fielded a full squad. They now look to reassess and plan for next season. Team manager and president Simon Hussey said: "I am really proud of how the players have performed during a really tough season."

"To finish in fourth place out of 13 teams is quite an achievement."

"The rest of our club teams have also played some great rugby against strong opposition."

There were wins for the 3rds and the 4ths against Kidderminster opposition.

# Wood block off win with late comeback

**Walsall Wood 2 Tipton Town 2**  
**AFTER going 2-0 down in 20 minutes, Wood staged a remarkable comeback, with Harry Harris scoring twice in the last 12 minutes to give them a share of the points.**

Tipton edged the opening exchanges and on eight minutes a ball over the top of the Wood defence was collected at pace by Marvin Nisbett.

He raced into the left of the box and keeper Raajan Gill mistimed his challenge and the resultant penalty was tucked away by Danny Ashton.

Nisbett again got away on the left and his cross to the far post was agonisingly inches away from Callum Martin. With 20 minutes gone Nisbett was again causing problems wide left. His ball inside was collected by Ben Hadley, who looked offside, to run on and score with a low drive.

Three minutes later it should have been 0-3. Conner Gater racing away down the left before cutting inside and putting the ball on a plate for Ashton four yards out but he delivered the ball into the grateful hands of Gill.

Wood started to make inroads when on 29 minutes Lewis Taylor Boyce hit a low cross into the box, Joey Butlin stepped over the ball and Harris hit a low drive that was well held by James Pemberton. With 34 minutes gone Deakin and Jamie Hawkins combined cleverly on the right but the cross was just too high for Harris, who could only glance a header wide. Two minutes later a powerful right wing run by Max Black saw his

### Football

cross put behind by Joe Rogers to deny Andre Gonzales.

Then on 39 minutes Rogers raced onto a ball on the right before cutting inside and hitting a rising drive just too high. Wood had the last attack of the half, Harris hitting a lovely crossfield ball into the right of the box that Deakin collected at speed. Gater saved Town with a superb tackle.

Just to remind Wood he was still a danger Nisbett got clear on 55 minutes. His low ball across the face of the six yard box was stabbed wide by Hadley. Ten minutes later Nisbett raced through the centre. He was half stopped by Boothe but won the ball back and raced into the box where skipper Lee Stretton made a superbly-timed tackle to put the ball behind for a corner.

In a packed penalty area a shot crashed off the foot of the right hand post. It was delivered back across goal and Gonzales headed a goal-bound effort off the line. On 78 minutes a long clearance from Gill was won by Butlin. He crossed into the right of the box and Drew Aiton flicked the ball on for Harris to score on the volley.

## Mongan battles his way to be new champion



New England Schoolsboy Champion Jerry Mongan with his prizes

NEW England Schoolboys champion Jerry Mongan has been told his national title is the hardest-earned by any fighter from Priory Park Boxing Club, writes Craig Birch.

The Dudley gym had turned out 11 national champions before this month, with Mongan having to fight tooth-and-nail to make it a dozen.

The teenage traveller, who is home schooled, nudged a split decision at the Huddersfield Sports Centre in

the 54kg category of Class B, for boxers born 2000.

Victory over Pinewood's Wayne Owen took the 14-year-old all the way to the delight of trainers Warren Davis and Peter Upton, along with brother Michael, in his corner.

Davis said: "We are all really chuffed for Jerry and out of all the national titles we have won as a club, I think this one was the hardest earned. He's done really well, he's

had some tough opponents from good clubs and he had to box three times just to get past the Midlands rounds.

"Then we had pre-quarter, quarter and semi-finals, all away from home and all over the country, so he's really had to pull out all of the stops."

Trainer Davies believes his young prodigy has come on leaps and bounds during his second stint in the competition. "He's not the finished article yet, as he's only 14."

## Gala final proves tough for swimmers

TWO Halesowen teams travelled to Droitwich for the Worcester Winter League A and B finals on Sunday.

Both teams were depleted due to absences but all swimmers produced battling performances with t A team gaining fourth place.

Halesowen B also performed well and ended in an excellent third place.

In the A team double event winners were Josh Bradley and James Cuthbert in the butterfly and breaststroke. Other individual winners were Zach Collins in the backstroke and Mark Laing and Jack Simpson in the freestyle.

The age 13 relay team were unbeatable taking both medley and freestyle with the team of Emma Bird, Kate Morrice, Lauren Hill and Jakob Baker.

The open team pulled off a great win in the final freestyle relay with the team including Eliza Bradley and Hannah Cuthbert

B team double winner was Jacob Darby in the breaststroke and freestyle. Other event winners were Paige Robbins in the freestyle, Sian Carey, Sophie Parsons and Euan Vaughan-Hawkins in the backstroke, Luke Morris in the butterfly and Joe Smith in the breaststroke.

## Craig gets shock call by Kiwis

FORMER Coombes Wood off-spinner Mark Craig has received a shock call-up to the New Zealand squad for their three-Tour tour of West Indies in June.

The 27-year-old, who spent two summers with the Halesowen club in 2005 and 2006, was the surprise inclusion in the Black Caps' 15-man party after Warwickshire spinner Jeetan Patel withdrew for personal reasons.

Craig, who plays for Otago, took 43 first-class wickets at 42.88 in the domestic season in his homeland.

Craig is one of two uncapped players in the squad and coach Mike Hesson said: "Mark has had a strong Plunket Shield."

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# SPORT

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Wood block off win  
with late comeback

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## Boxing

Mongan battles to  
be new champion

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email: Chronsport@expressandstar.co.uk

## Tonks' magic lifts the Yeltz

Halesowen Town 1 Loughborough Dynamo 0

A LATE moment of magic from Tom Tonks kept Halesowen two points clear at the top of the Evo-Stik Division One South.

In a nervy home performance the lowly visitors started brightly with Martin Bowles volleying a loose ball over the bar in the fifth minute. Joe Phesant and Nathan Watson then both went close for Loughborough before Ben Haseley turned to hit wide of the far post in Halesowen's first real chance.

Neil MacKenzie fired a 21st minute volley over the visiting bar but it was Loughborough's Luke Smithson who then saw his fierce volley beaten away by home goalkeeper Matt Sargeant.

The Yeltz improved before the interval as Haseley flicked on for Lyseden Christie to drag his shot inches wide and a long range low shot from Aaron Griffiths was grabbed by goalkeeper Alex Pycock.

At the start of the second half Sargeant saved again from Smithson and at the other end Curtis Tilt's header was cleared off the Loughborough goal-line.

The edgy Grove finally erupted with delight in the 82nd minute when Tonks fired home the winner.

## Runners take on marathon

AFTER months of training athletes from Dudley King-swinford Running Club tested themselves on the biggest stage of all by taking part in Sunday's London Marathon. DK runners made up 16 of the 36,000 strong field.

First back was Dave Norman in 3.12.19, then Lorna Hulme, 3.21.24, Matt Biggs, 3.23.26, Graham Wildgoose, 3.23.51, Mark Homer, 3.26.10, Simon Hughes, 3.26.24, Mark Judge, 3.35.06, Andy Litchfield, 3.43.23, Liz Hettle, 4.16.03, Karen Doy, 4.18.02, Dave Garbutt, 4.26.09, Janetta Sanders, 4.48.10, Natalie Litchfield, 4.51.15, Helen Williamson, 4.53.09, Sam Hemming, 5.23.55 and Laura Evenson in 5.34.51.

Club chairman Mick Quane completed the Rotterdam Marathon in 3.31.58 with Catherine Quane in 3.57.08.

## Play-off hopes alive after home victory

Stourbridge 3 AFC Totton 0

GARY Hackett's men kept their play-off ambitions in the Calor League Premier Division on track and also condemned their Hampshire opponents to a bottom three finish as they ran out comfortable winners in the end after surviving a couple of first-half scares.

Stourbridge suffered a blow before kick-off when Luke Benbow had to be ruled out through injury.

The home side carved out an early opportunity as Louis Harris cut out a pass and worked a one-two with Kayelden Brown before

Glassboys

flashing a shot off-target from the edge of the box. Four minutes later Sean Geddes sent in a free-kick from the left and Brown thrust out a leg to get a foot to the ball, but his effort was blocked by Steve Mowthorpe in the Stags goal.

In the 15th minute Drew Canavan fed Geddes, who played a square pass to Netan Sansara and he drilled in a sweetly-struck shot that was well held by Mowthorpe.

Stourbridge responded to a Totten revival with Leon Broadhurst heading just

over the bar from Ben Billingham's right-wing free-kick before the home side broke the deadlock in the 34th minute.

A corner from the right by Billingham was headed goal-wards by Brown and Louis Harris forced the ball over the line at the far post.

Five minutes before the interval Totton could have got back on level terms with the hosts grateful for a double save from Dean Coleman.

Stourbridge needed a second goal and they went close on 52 minutes when a ball forward from Geddes was collected by Bill-

ingham and he slipped a short pass inside to Kyle Haynes, but he scuffed his shot and Mowthorpe saved comfortably at his near post.

Five minutes later they dealt the decisive blow as Harris started the move that led to Billingham exchanging passes with Geddes on the right-hand edge of the box before arrowing a shot into the far corner of the net.

Stourbridge grabbed a third goal on 79 minutes when Billingham's right-wing corner was spilled by Mowthorpe and Sansara punished the error by stabbing home a rising shot.

## Heathens power to top total

CRADLEY kicked-off their National League title defence in perfect fashion as they romped to a record-breaking 68-21 victory at Scunthorpe.

Just a few days after equalling their club record win with a 69-23 triumph over King's Lynn, the in-form Heathens went one better on Sunday with an emphatic victory by an unprecedented 47-point margin.

Taking on an inexperienced Scunthorpe side, the Monmore Green outfit were always expected to take a comfortable win.

Yet team boss Will Pottinger was thrilled to see his side put in a professional display to cruise to all four National League points as they begin their defence of the title they won so spectacularly in 2013.

He said: "Everyone was very professional with the excellent job they did - all the riders scored well and there could be no complaints with the performance in the end."

"It's always nice to kick off your league campaign with a win and all four points as well."

## Hounds chase down merit title

THE Stourbridge Greyhounds capped of a great season winning their penultimate game 22-25 away to Kidderminster 2nds to claim the Worcester and Hereford Merit 1 League.

They led 17-3 at half time, but Kiddy got to 22-22 with 10 minutes left. A late penalty and dogged defence saw the Hounds home.

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# TRIES RECORDS BROKEN IN WIN

Stourbridge Saxons 78 (12T), Bromsgrove 6

WINGER Nathan Bressington established two new club records as he ran in five tries against a relegated and outgunned Bromsgrove outfit.

The Saxons gave their points scored differential a crucial boost as the challenge for the National 2 North title goes to the final fixtures on April 26.

Though they must travel to Harrogate and secure another bonus point win, the Saxons' fate rests largely on Darlington Mowden Park's clash with leaders Macclesfield, where a freak one could yet deny the Saxons a top-two finish.

Bressington's haul broke the club record he had held with Tom Richardson. It also took his tally for the season to 22, eclipsing Drew Harper's record of 20 established last season.

Bromsgrove were first onto the scoreboard, full-back Jon Critchlow kicking two penalties in the opening 10 minutes as the Saxons were penalised for not releasing in the tackle.

It wasn't long before they settled, opening their account through a Tom Jarvis run in after Pete White's quick tap on Bromsgrove's line.

Bressington's first try was created by White's loop around fly half Sam Robinson, his long floated pass putting the winger clear with just Critchlow to evade.

He secured his hat-trick in the space of six minutes, the second try coming from a lineout steal and deft work by centre Stef Shillingford, the third following a break

Rugby

by prop Mark George and Jarvis's well worked offload.

Jarvis secured his second try after joining a short range driving maul set up by Robbie Hurrell's lineout take.

The visitors lost scrum half Aaron Higgins to the sinbin. George then scored from another catch and drive to make the half time score 40-6.

The second half started with a break down the left by winger Jamie Hearn, setting up field position for White to link with flanker Nigel Mukarati for a short range drive over the line.

An aimless Bromsgrove clearance kick led to Bressington scoring again after work by second rows Ben Hughes and Hurrell.

Hooker Scott Wright scored his first try of the campaign before Bressington got his fifth.

The final scores were from a scorching break by replacement centre Gary Dipple and a short-range run-in for Mukarati who spotted a mismatch in the Bromsgrove defensive line.

Hearn landed nine of the 12 conversion attempts to make the final score 78-6.



Record-breaking Nathan Bressington leaves a Bromsgrove defender in his wake to score first of his five tries

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